



BOOTHAEVEN'S magazine issue seven, summer 2022. Interviews with Putrid Marsh, Vaamatar, Nidstong, Blinding Sun, Hexenbezem, Hotchin Pit, Tenebrositas and Gates of Londra. Additional contribution by White Filth.

It ain't nothing but more hot shit. **Boothaeven's** Another classic zine for y'all to vibe with.

Black Metal in defiance of being genre-ised.

"You know what I'd wish for right now? To write an opening sentence like the one in '100 Years of Solitude': *'Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice.'*"

I don't know if it's really 'zine material' though... Somewhat less off-topic would be the opening phrase Touch & Go chieftain Tesco Vee wrote for the liner notes on his The Fix compilation. Here it goes: *"The plan was simple, book into East Lansing and pick up a pack of the overpriced Turkish lung torpedoes I was reefin' on at the time, and pop into Hobies for a bucket of the best chowder this side of Beantown, guaranteed to be brimming with fist sized mollusks swimming in a deep cream broth, and washed down with a couple schooners of brew du jour."*

It's not Marquez, but I would go for it. Of course I would; I'm already half content if a sentence of mine is in fact proper English. Hey, not my language, I'm only trespassing here.

But back to that The Fix compilation. Alongside Tesco Vee's writing is a contribution from Thurston Moore. Not at all relevant, but the man played in the so-called 'BM super group' Twilight and since this issue of the zine turned out to be very much Black Metal flavored, I thought I could bring it up. Because, yes, Boothaeven's Magazine number seven: fairly six six six.

My god, enough about Boothaeven's Magazine already, back to Mr. Moore. Moore owns a publishing company called Ecstatic Peace Library. One of the books that was released through it is *'The Death Archives. Mayhem 1984-94'* by Jørn Stubberud, Mayhem's Necrobutcher that is.

Necrobutcher isn't Marquez, and his writing doesn't surpass Tesco Vee's either, but it's better than what you're reading right now, and it's accompanied with great images. The opening phrase goes like this: *"I like the little details and references on this bus card"*. There's a picture of the bus card on the next page, it looks dull.

To promote Stubberud's book at least one talk between Moore and Necrobutcher was organized in Trondheim. You can find it on Youtube, which I did.

Necrobutcher's contribution to that conversation was basic and in line of what one would expect from a man who's still willingly naming himself 'Necrobutcher'. Admittedly, at some point he said something funny... or in a way his mother did, Necrobutcher just quoted her: *"Jørn, why don't you get a pretty girl to sing for your band? Maybe you'd make some money?"*. After Messiah, Kittil, Maniac, Dead and Attila passing the revue, you can hardly blame the woman for at least considering that possibility.

Moore is more of a words kinda guy, and that showed during the talk. He used an awful lot of them but in the end he didn't say much. Not unlike this introduction, really. Fucking Boothaeven's Magazine.

El Moore is a popular rock artist, he's a Sonic Youth original for Pete's sake, and consequently he gets interviewed a lot. In 2020 The Guardian newspaper even gave us, simpletons, the opportunity to question him via a webchat. Oh, the opportunities that come with these forms of new media.

I wished someone had confronted him once again with his statement about Black Metal being *'music made by pussies of the lowest order'*. Just to annoy him a little bit, poking the star.

Like that time when a Rolling Stone journalist went for it, having The Moore explaining his BM pussy-thing as follows: *"Black metal, it doesn't even consider itself music. In fact, it doesn't want to be confused with any kind of music because it's something else entirely. It's a voided concept from its start. It's all about complete disintegration of existence. It's a music that uses the elements of rock instrumentation but it's so anti-everything that, for me, it doesn't matter what you say about it because it doesn't exist. I figured I would just write something ridiculous about it. And boy, did black-metal devotees get really upset by it. You're not supposed to be alive, so why are you getting upset?"*

"But Mr. Moore, what does that even mean, and what's pussy about it?" That question wasn't asked.

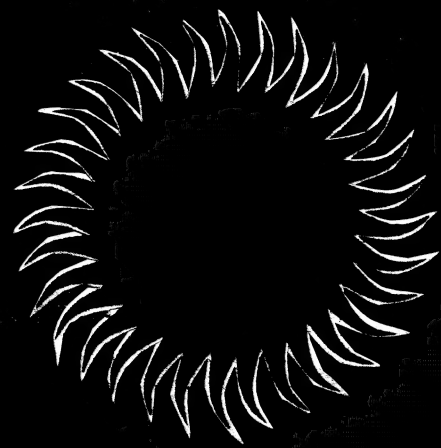
Instead a random Joe Public who described himself as 'a huge Mayhem fan', had seen the Moore/ Stubberud promo talk and wanted to know what attracted Moore to that kind of music. Even though Moore had literally explained that during the talk itself, he was courteous enough to provide our self-declared Mayhem fan with an elaborate answer nevertheless. I will quote it only partially: *"[bla bla bla] ... [BM] went beyond metal, and punk rock, and became this other music that was in defiance of being genre-ised. It was so curious - it existed almost as a noise music. [bla bla bla]"*

Wait, what's that? "Black Metal, in defiance of being genre-ised."

I think I'll take that as the ambiguous theme of Boothaeven's Magazine issue seven. Why not use it as the opening line to the zine? Or even as a stand-alone phrase covering the whole introduction for that matter. Nothing more, nothing less, just that sentence.

JAN'S
ROOMS





BLINDING SUN

"Incoherent, rhapsodic, literally futile."

Interview with Boul God.



By way of an introduction: where would you place Blinding Sun in today's Black Metal culture (sound wise, ideologically, thematically...)?

If it were up to me, I would place Blinding Sun totally outside of today's "culture". I'd rather not be so negative about the state of the genre, but if I'm being honest, I think black metal is in a really shitty place. There is so much horrible black metal being made right now, probably more now than ever before. I'll let others contextualize my music how they want. Some guy on YouTube said about my music, "this isn't black metal"; this was more of a compliment than he probably realized or intended.

Well then let's discuss BM a bit first before going into the music you release with Blinding Sun. Hereunder you'll find five text fragments on BM taken from various zines. Could you comment on these...

"Sounds can be a very effective mode of transportation. They can whisk you away to faraway lands, spectral worlds, the future and the past... In this sense transcendence does not have to be some religious out of body experience."

(Invunche interview, Boothaeven's issue five)

This is, of course, true. I think sound is most effective at this when paired with smell. If, instead of album artwork, I could have released *The Magic Mountain* with the smell of stale tobacco in cold winter air, I would have done so.

That's actually an interesting take on releasing music: obviously a lot of attention goes into the visual aesthetics accompanying a release (which has practical considerations too: if it needs to be a thing, then it might as well be an 'appropriate looking' thing), but an olfactory component could definitely enhance the way music is experienced.

This echoes the idea of Dead inhaling from a jar containing a dead bird when performing with Mayhem in order to directly experience death. More mainstream would be those Smell-O-Vision films in the 80's or 'scratch and sniff cards'. I know I would prefer the latter over once again another 'poster included'.

At the risk of being too gimmicky or artsy, do you think BM would benefit from artists reflecting more about the format of their physical output? After all: we're operating in an underground genre that leaves room for experimentation, that releases in small editions, has a dedicated audience...

These are good examples that you mention, but I want to clarify that I'm not actually advocating for the use of scratch-and-sniff vinyl sleeves or something. I was more so trying to point out that, for certain albums at least, certain smells might be more evocative of the 'vibe' of the music than any image.

With that caveat, I think there is definitely a time and place for elaborate physical releases. I tend to hate the typical release roster for a full-length album by a semi-successful BM band: maybe 50-100 'pro' tapes, plus a small run of vinyl or CDs, and maybe a 'Die-hard' edition of one or both of those formats. If your music is not special, what makes you think I want it

to come in a special package? Nothing is worse than a run-of-the-mill black metal album that comes in a cloth bag with a drawstring. Elaborate packaging is just marketing when it's not connected to the music in some way.

In the noise scene, there is a rich tradition of unusual or atypical packaging, and, on balance, it's done with a lot more care and attention to detail than in BM. Don't get me wrong- noise artists are not immune to the trite traps of pointless elaboration that so many BM bands fall victim to- but more often than not, the packaging is somehow a part of the larger artistic statement. This is easier in noise, where the themes of the art are a lot more far-reaching than Satanism, nihilism, anti-humanism, nationalism, or whatever flavor of BM you prefer. But there is plenty of experimental or otherwise atypical black metal that could benefit from thematic packaging.

Are there examples of artists pushing the boundaries of the audio media you find particularly interesting?

In terms of shout-outs to labels whose releases I think walk this line gracefully, the first that comes to mind is Anti-Social Kultur England, a noise/experimental label from the UK. Some of their releases are insanely elaborate (see the 'Scrying Mirror' edition of the recent Occulted Death Stance release *Feathered Serpent*), but even the no-frills releases are thematically sound in subtle ways, whether their design mimics a cigarette packet or a football hooligan recruitment flyer or whatever else. They also release a fair number of CDs, which I like a lot. CDs rule.



"Obskuritatem is an entity on its own and I have no control over it. I am getting consumed by it every day more and more, it is like being lost in a huge labyrinth of darkness - once you are in, there is no way out... and there should not be! Its existence is what keeps me alive amongst these pathetic peaces of flesh called 'humans' and it is my weapon against them."

(Obskuritatem interview, Dungeon Grease issue 1)

Obskuritatem is one of the few artists who could say something like this without losing my respect. I think his music is genuinely quite terrifying, and certainly several shades darker than the average modern black metal. I don't doubt that he is genuinely "lost in a huge labyrinth of darkness". But don't take this the wrong way: chances are, if you find yourself saying something like this, you're probably pretty fucking stupid.

"Modern BM sickens me, its emptiness and lack of integrity makes for terrible mundane and boring music, music produced by vapid people, for vapid people." (Intro to Nocturnal Emissions, May 2021).

I echo this for the most part. Though, I wouldn't say modern BM "sickens" me - it just bores the hell out of me. It's not nearly impactful enough to evoke sickness.

Then what exactly is the type of impact you are looking for in BM?

I mean, when I first got into BM the stories of the Scandinavian second wave, or even the satanic imagery, bore some kind of 'danger' which appealed to me... Yet every article or interview I read related to those days has chipped away from that initial feeling. Modern BM acts uttering simplistic and superficial claims of nihilism aren't really restoring that feeling either (as you probably referred to in your thought about the Obskuritatem-quote). So what's the impact we might expect from BM still?

There are still black metal artists who have a mystique/aura/narrative surrounding their music which draws me in. But this is a very small number. I continue to be drawn to black metal for two reasons: 1) I like the music and 2) my friends make it. As to the latter reason: I tend to like my friends' ideas, which means I usually like their music, but even when I don't care for a particular release, I'll always support their work. The former reason is the main driver of my listening, though. If something isn't viscerally engaging on a purely musical level, no amount of imagery or marketing will save it. Maybe I am in a minority of people who actually like blast beats and tremolo picking on a music level.

"The appeal of 'traditional' BM bands is that of attempting to understand the unfathomable." (Carved Cross interview, Boothaeven's issue one)

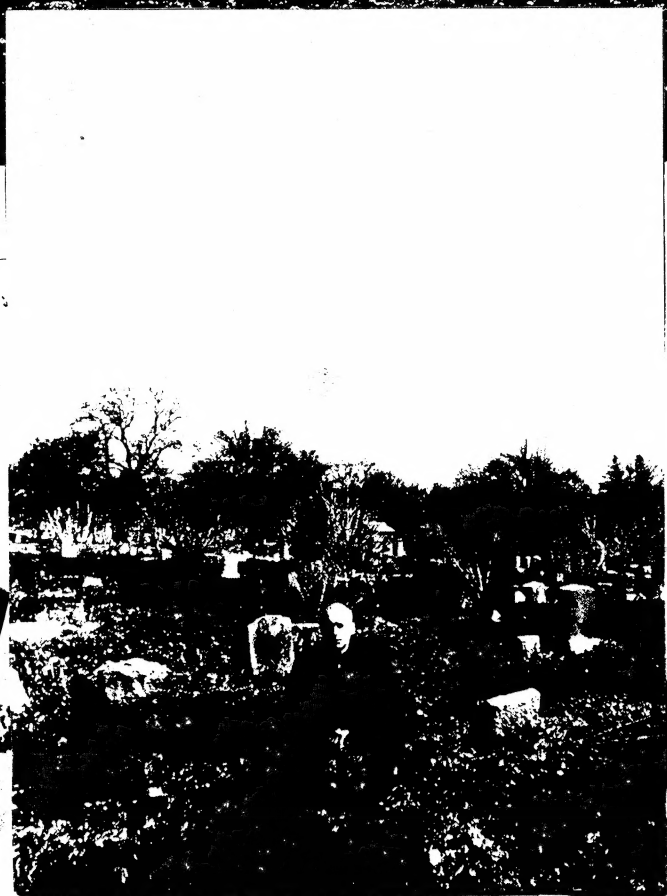
I'm not sure what he's referring to when he says "traditional" BM bands. Is he referring to the first and second wave of the genre? Or is he referring to modern bands whose style can be described as "traditional"? In either case, I can't say I entirely understand or agree.

I think he referred to the Scandinavian second wave, and more specifically the way he associated these bands with sheer negativity and devotion to something so pure and hateful. That could explain today's relevance of these traditional records.

I don't know if I have much else to say about this one. It's definitely true that the second wave birthed most of the best black metal that will ever be made, and a lot of it has to do with the purity of the angst underlying its creation. I wouldn't contest that point and I don't have much to add to it.

"The ceremony of performing Black Metal is something that shall remain in the shadows. As any kind of magic or ritual should remain." (Black Cilice interview, Dungeon Grease issue 1)

I find this to be quite compelling, and a timely reminder to modern black metal fans. The less people that listen to this genre, the better it will be. I look forward to the day when current raw BM fans move on to the next social media trend.





Let's focus on the latest Blinding Sun release. Obviously *The Magic Mountain* is inspired by the Thomas Mann novel of the same name. One could argue that it's somewhat obvious for a BM band to be inspired by an author who in turn was influenced by Nietzsche, Wagner, Schopenhauer or Goethe (the household names when it comes to BM philosophy), on the other hand, it really isn't that apparent... At what particular point did you felt the need to do something with his work? Was it whilst reading *The Magic Mountain*, an experience that brought you back to that book...?

Thank you for pointing out that Mann seems like an obvious candidate for inspiring a black metal project. While I don't think he's necessarily an 'obvious' choice, I also don't think it's as surprising as some people took it to be when I released *The Magic Mountain*. But that's beside the point. I've addressed your specific question somewhat directly in a previous interview, and I'll provide that answer again because I think I stated it quite clearly the first time around:

"The music on the album took direct influence from a section in the novel, about two-thirds of the way through, wherein the protagonist is granted access to a gramophone and a small collection of recordings after being deprived of music for a considerable portion of the narrative. He is immediately enraptured by the recordings, and proceeds to install himself as the unofficial 'keeper of the discs'-caring for the records,

broadcasting them for other people, and, most often, listening to them in solitude. The music begins to influence his perception of life itself, with a certain Schubert recording (which is interpolated into the final track on the album) having a pronounced effect on his consciousness. Without any specific intention on my part, I spent a few months not listening to much black metal, and during those months, I found myself returning back to those chapters in Mann's novel which I have just described. Like the protagonist, my music break eventually ended. But instead of returning to my favorite

black metal records after this listening-hiatus, I simply picked up my guitar and started writing the album. The whole album was composed and recorded in the few weeks following that decision to begin writing."

So, as you can see, the inspiration for this album was quite spontaneous. Perhaps this is part of the reason that the idol of Mann seems somewhat obvious or self-explanatory to me—because, in reality, the idea just revealed itself to me in a totally natural and uncontrived way.

The music on *The Magic Mountain* has a somewhat wavy character: as if you're listening to it while sequentially pushing the tragi of your ears and then releasing the pressure on them. That, and the fact that there's really a lot going on musically, makes it a challenging album to get into. However, once you 'get it', it's in fact a very melodic and memorable journey. Did you intentionally make a record that was both welcoming and off-putting at the same time? And more in general: what is it that you want to capture and conceive with Blinding Sun's sound?

Thanks for that anatomical characterization of the listening experience — I quite like that. I certainly was very intentional in my production techniques, and I was aware that they would produce something that is hard to listen to. It would be very stupid of me to pretend like this production style was some freak accident or gift from God; it was an artistic choice like any other. However, there were several decisions that I left up to chance, involving the

mixing of the album primarily. I really tried not to overthink it, and to just go with something that I felt captured what I was trying to express with the album.

Which brings me to your second question. The mission statement of this album is: "*incoherent, rhapsodic, literally futile*." This is a Mann quote (Porter translation) that I feel perfectly captures what I was trying to express in the music. The recordings themselves are incoherent — this is a result of the production style. I don't know why I chose to record it/mix it precisely the way I did. I just like shit that sounds this way. Witchmoon was an inspiration probably, but I didn't have any specific records in mind when I was recording/mixing. The music itself is rhapsodic — striving for grand achievement, but fully aware

of its redundancies and failures; self-serious; but not to a degree that is pathetic; and, ultimately, futile, in the sense that all artistic expression is.

An important theme within Mann's *The Magic Mountain* is the aspect of time, for instance the relationship between the time it takes to literally read the lines and the time that is covered by the tale. Or the questioning of the linearity of time... I have the feeling that the idea of time was an important factor for your *The Magic Mountain* as well.

Yes, time is a crucial element in the music and lyrics. Time is almost a character of its own in Mann's novel, and he is constantly drawing the reader's attention toward and away from

the time-element of the narrative. The book is incredibly long, but it only feels that way part of the time (i.e., when Mann wants you to feel that way); Mann makes artistic use of the fact that time moves slowly when actively perceived, and quickly when not. I tried to play with repetition and long-form looping riff structures to bend the time-element in a similar way, though I don't pretend to have the kind of compositional mastery required to be able to do that deftly. Lyrically, the second half of the album deals with these themes very explicitly, especially as they relate to the human concerns of living and dying.

Although Mann's *The Magic Mountain* deals with substantial themes it was intended to be a more humoristic companion to *Death In Venice*. Did you incorporate a form of subtle humor into the album as well?

There is definitely an element of humor in the lyrics, and I think this might be lost on the listener if they don't have access to the lyrics while they listen. I'm not going to tell your readers how to listen to music, but I'd encourage curious readers to, well, read the lyrics.

To end this interview: you mentioned earlier that you spent a longer period without listening to BM, thereafter you composed *The Magic Mountain*. I'm curious though as to what were the first BM records you returned to eventually?

The three big ones I remember listening to a lot were: Arckanum — *Fran Marder*; Marblebog — *Forestheart*; and Sacrificia Mortuorum — *Maturum Est*.



HOTCHIN PIT

"It should never be safe."

Hotchin Pit is pretty clear about not being a label. However, the physical representations from the Hotchin Pit philosophy and activities are quasi identical to the output one expects from a typical record label. What are the main objectives for Hotchin Pit and why do you explicitly distance Hotchin Pit from a label?

Hotchin Pit isn't a label due to it only housing and releasing my projects. My own grasp on what a typical label is consists of people collaborating and releasing material of others work (and usually not their own). The Hotchin Pit is mine and only mine. It's a realm for myself that I have complete control over. I don't want nor need help with it from anyone. No one enters The Pit.

Recently I have set up a 'sub-label' the 'Rabid-Attack Corps' to release bands and projects of close kombattants to the Hotchin Pit.

What has influenced Hotchin Pit up until now both musically as well as more ideologically? Where lay your roots in this music?

Main influences stem from the ancient history of Northumberland (and also some more modern history in regards to the miners and the pits). Music wise, I generally look to and am drawn to others that convey their own local history and culture in their music and art. I don't really understand why people would make something they have no connection too.

Can you give an example of the latter? I mean, I am immediately inclined to link that explanation to the raw, punk character a lot of Hotchin Pit records have... but that's perhaps a bit too stereotypical of a view. What do you consider to be your (relevant) musical heritage though?

The old masters: Burzum, Bathory, Les Légions Noires, The Temple Of Fullmoon, Ildjarn, BBH. Other than that, just gritty working-class shite. UK82, Oi, Punk. Anything with a simple, stompy-drum beat. Ultra-Violent 'Crime For Revenge'...

For people who aren't really paying attention to tapes Odious Hiss' Adherence to the Forbidden Divination will most likely be the introduction to Hotchin Pit since it was the first record being released and distributed on vinyl (via Cold Beach). Did you specifically opt for that Odious Hiss release to get released on vinyl or was it the person(s) behind Cold Beach who selected it? Do you find Adherence to the Forbidden Divination to be a representable introduction to the Hotchin Pit aesthetics?

I was approached and asked by the person(s) behind Cold Beach to have the tape re-released on vinyl. I don't collect vinyl myself but most people seem to prefer them and that's fine and I can see the merit in them. So, I was more than willing to go ahead with the release. The tyrants at Cold Beach done the release justice and it turned out champion.

Like I stated before, the Hotchin Pit isn't a label, it a 'realm'. All projects are interlinked and all come from myself. There's lore within the projects that if you look at the inserts and song titles can be traced to other projects. So, with that in mind, any project from The Pit is an equally representative introduction.

Can we expect more Hotchin Pit records getting a vinyl treatment?

There will be a new LP re-release coming soon through a label and there is currently an AAD SLECK double LP out on Legion Blotan. As for Pit releases, I've got the idea of doing a small lathe cut (7 or 10 inch) consisting of a split between B.M.O.T.H.T C.&S.I.T.A & either Hollows Tower or Odious Hiss but we'll see....

Right, about that AAD SLECK LP. Although somewhat more low-profile (especially in comparison to some newer, yet more popular UK BM labels) George Proctor and Legion Blotan take an authentic and valued stance in UK's underground noise and BM scene; I'm sure you agree. How does it feel to join these ranks?

Aye, it's an honor to be on the Legion Blotan roster. I suppose Legion Blotan might only go under the radar to the tourists that don't matter anyway, so that's for the best I'd say. Every release has great spirit and that's what makes it one of, if not the best BM label in England.

Do you feel connected to UK BM in general?

I feel a connection to the stuff up North mainly, like Legion Botan and Anti-Social Kultur England. I do have a great deal of admiration for some bands and artists down South, but I don't have as a strong of a connection as I do to the ones up here. I hate the South. They've always treated us up here like fucking dogs.

Some copies of the AAD SLECK record come with a special edition of Black Book zine. What was the idea behind it?



All the LP's come with a copy of that Black Book. I was asked if I had anything to accompany the release and figured that would do nicely. Gives a bit of context to what the records detail. The hardships of the strongest men in England and the constant nightmare they had to endure to fuel the nation and put food on the table.

Where does that fascination for mining come from? Actually, we used to have an important mining industry in Belgium too, as well as the tragic stories that came with it (most notably the mining disaster in Marcinelles in 1956)...

There's a few reasons. I was born in what was once the world's largest coal-mining village. Both my grandfathers, their fathers and a lot of men were miners. I've always had a great admiration for them because it was a grueling and mostly terrifying job that the entire country relied on them doing. So, their strength and how they carried themselves is something I've always looked up to. Also, there's a lot of folklore that developed down the mines that I find especially fascinating.

We mentioned Black Book zine already: do you believe physical zines still have a place in today's underground scene?

As long as tapes and vinyl are still kicking around, I don't see why not. Having something physical and tangible will always be superior than having it on a computer. You get more from it because, well, you have to touch it for a start! Engages more with the senses and it's just a better experience, although it's admittedly sometimes less convenient, but we shouldn't be too comfortable anyway.

You seem to be passionate about both the history of Northumberland as well as hiking, resulting in (seemingly) long walks towards historical monuments or ancient relics. It seems like the physical aspect of walking in nature has played an important role within BM (especially since the second wave).

What does it mean to you exactly, and does it influence your activities with Hotchin Pit?

Going on walks and visiting the ancient relics of my county are very important to me. Every time we head out and find a ruin or artifact, I feel more complete in myself. Being Northumbrian

is a huge part of my identity and with every new discovery awakens blood memory, and I'm taught something new. It obviously has a massive impact on all the pit releases but also on everything else I do.

Can you tell about a Northumbrian ruin or artifact that has a special meaning to you and why that is?

There's many but for different reasons. One that stands out is a small boulder located in a wood in Lemmington, Northumberland. I believe it's the only one in the U.K. that has both prehistoric cup-and-ring art & Anglo-Saxon inscriptions. The runic inscription "lffp" means either "relics" or "leave behind". Most likely left as graffiti by normal everyday Northumbrians during that time. It's important to me because there's thousands of years of concentrated history & power in such a small artifact.

You're probably right: one could consider the term 'underground music' to be an anachronism these days. And while this definitely has its advantages, there's also some sort of aspiration within BM to have the genre withdrawing into itself so to speak. How do you estimate today's black metal scene as a whole? Can you get excited by projects outside of Hotchin Pit (and, obviously, Rabid-Attack Corps)?

I often ask this question in my own mag. I think the internet has had both positive and negative effects on the 'scene' as a whole. Giving audience to people with spirit and also shills. People cry about the influx of BM but it must be the same with any scene. Making and releasing music/art is so easy now because of tech and the internet, there's no way it'll slow down. The tipping point will come very soon. Hopefully for the better, but that's doubtful. Releases that usually pique my interest mainly come from friends and on occasion from a few other labels and projects I try to keep my eye on. Projects that carry the flame to the old ways.

And to bring things to a closure: what does black metal mean to you, and what do you look for in the genre?

Black Metal is for and by the elite. It is more than just music. The total embodiment of all hate, pride and anguish. It should never be safe and we can never let it be safe.



GATES OF LONDRA

*"doomed champions,
struggling antiheroes
serving chaos and order"*

Interview with R.F.



Since I produced a lot of music at home, I had everything there and ready. I turned on my Alesis drum computer, took my guitar and recorded four tracks. Since I've always loved industrial sounds and bands like Mysticum, for me the concept with black metal guitar and drum computer was fitting and fun to work.

I sent the tracks over to Jannis of Födweg, Brand,... and asked him if he would be interested in adding some keyboard sounds in one or two tracks. He send me back 'The Tragic Millenium' with his additional key work and I was completely flattered and excited.

Gates Of Londra is a pretty new project, but you've already earned your stripes in the underground music, most notably with the electro/noise project Rosa Nebel and the darkened punk band Parasite Dreams. What triggered you into forming Gates Of Londra? What are your intentions with the band?

Gates of Londra was a spontaneous idea during the first covid lockdown in March 2020. I started reading Moorcock stuff in 2019 and got more into 'History of the Runestaff' and 'Elric'. During this strange lockdown times I had more time for reading, I grabbed the comic edition of 'History of the Runestaff'. This was crucial.

There was no plan or intention for the project 'Gates of Londra', just boredom and passion. Honestly I didn't expect the first tape to receive this huge (positive) response. I was kind of surprised.

I found this demo tape review online (via thecallofthenight.com) and it says: "...I wouldn't be surprised if they have already said everything they desired to and promptly disappear back from whence they came..." Actually that described my mood during the recording quite well. But thereafter the tapes dropped and the response pushed me, there was a lot of motivation and new song ideas for the new tape 'Servants of the Runestaff'.



Like most of us I too read the obligatory fantasy classics (Tolkien, Herbert...), but I must admit Moorcock hadn't appeared on my radar. He has quite the bibliography, so were would you recommend a newby to start? How far does his influence go for Gates of Londra: is it mainly the artwork and lyrics, or are there sonical references to be heard as well?

It is mainly the lyrics and artwork. We used a sample in the song 'Jewel in the Skull' where you can hear Moorcock reading out of the first book of his saga.

I got a bit obsessed with his books, but 'History of the Runestaff' or 'Elric' are quite good to start with. Since his works combine science fiction and fantasy, you will find a weird, fascinating and broad spectrum of topics: post-apocalyptic worlds, war, battles, technology and magic, time and space traveling, drugs ...

The debut tape was released via Födweg which is becoming a focal point for the Austrian BM (and adjacent) scene. An interesting band on Födweg is Bränd; which you obviously know since Rosa Nebel did a split with them. The curious thing about that split is the fact that it was made by making use of a vinylograph. Could you briefly explain the idea behind the vinylograph, and why you opted for making use of it. I think Pharmakon did something similar by the way.

The vinylograph, 'an automated vinyl cutting machine' was a diploma project built by Natascha Muhić and Christoph Freidhöfer.

They invited bands to do live recording sessions at SSTR6, a small open space for music and art. You play your song live and the machine simultaneously is cutting the 7" vinyl. I had the idea to do several split 7", one with Brand.

It was a fun experience even though you start hating the song after playing it live 25 times haha. A befriended band recorded 50 singles in one day, so they had to play their song 50+ times.

And yes, I remember Pharmakon got invited to SSTR6 before her gig in Vienna. There was this live listening and recording session.



That new record 'Servants of the Runestaff' sounds even more ambitious with different extra influences blended into the music: there's a postpunk touch, but also more progressive metal elements. Did you set out to experiment with different aspects of heavy music outside the BM realm? Is this the last chapter in the GoL story then, or do you intent to further explore the world of Moorcock?

It was not intentional to be honest. But since I'm listening to a lot of heavy metal and (post) punk, it's impossible for me not to include it in my guitar work.

Like I said before, there are no plans with Gates of Londra. I thought the project would end with the release of the demo but there are still some song ideas and there will be a split coming up, definitely.

You mentioned Mysticum earlier as an example: while being one of those pioneering Scandinavian BM bands, they don't get named all that much these days. But that's probably true for most industrial influenced BM bands... That being said, I feel like we're hearing a lot of electronics coming from the BM scene today. Not just the typical accompanying synths a la Dimmu Borgir, but all sorts of Dungeon Synth, ambient soundscapes (new Old Tower), weird niche stuff like 'Keller Musik' (Friedhof), 'medieval chiptune' (Book of Skelos) or other eccentric bands (Old Nick & Grimestone records, Kakofonium, Moonworshiper records...). You have a background in electronics: how do you estimate these efforts? Do you gravitate towards that sort of electronic BM-inspired music? I'm asking because I have the feeling that the bar for a lot of these Bandcamp projects is rather low...

I'm not really interested in, or how you say "gravitate towards", electronic BM-inspired music (I'm not talking about BM classics with key work, dungeon synth or industrial influenced BM bands.)

But I don't really actively pursue that 'scene' or trend you mention. At times I tried to dig into it, but like you said, the bar is rather low. I'm sure there is good and interesting stuff around. Thanks for the names, definitely have to check out some band and labels you mentioned (Moonworshiper).

There always 've been overlapping aesthetics and sound design between BM and electronic music (also in atmosphere and vibe). In my opinion there are a few artists and labels around who can capture that vibe and connection (Fernow and Hospital Productions, BRUGMANZIAH...)

But nowadays it often ends in a failed attempt to copy or sell stuff. Another trend I've never understood is retrowave. It is weirdly linked to the (Black) metal scene, but I totally don't get it. Polished, generic music

That brings us to a peculiar paradox in BM: while the genre often awes me with at times unseemly outings of conservatism, it's simultaneously a genre that allows quite a bit of musical experimentalism. A balancing act that might be advantageous for creating an interesting genre... Would you agree? Where would you situate Gates Of Londra in that scheme...

Yes I agree, that's an interesting point.

All in all I would say the (political) roots of Black Metal are conservative and reactionary. That is an important part of the genre which you should consider. Art and music does not happen in a vacuum space. When you consume it, you have to deal with it, be aware of it and reflect it.

For me Black Metal was and is always about a certain feeling, energy and power carried by atmosphere. That's why it, how you say "allows quite a bit of musical experimentalism", a room for experimentalism.

I'm sure there are a lot of conservative elitist out there, who love to define for others how Black Metal should look and sound like. And there are even some points I share with them: Black Metal is embedded in a nearly 40 year old history and tradition. You have to stick to this tradition!

I see Gates of Londra somewhere between this tradition and other musical influences that are important to me.

Also Moorcock's storytelling allows me to combine this fantasy framed romanticism with progressive and experimental content. Unlike Tolkien, Moorcock tries not to re-establish the old, traditional, 'good', peaceful world in his books. His 'order & chaos' theme is not about 'good vs. evil', it is more like a correlation which creates something new, where you can't go back again. Take Elric or Hawkmoon, both doomed champions, struggling antiheroes serving chaos and order, trying and failing to strike a balance.



HEXENBEZEM

"Change through confrontation and disruption"

Interview with Gideon F. & Jasper.

Illustrations by Tadzio Danniell (Tetsubakru tattoo).

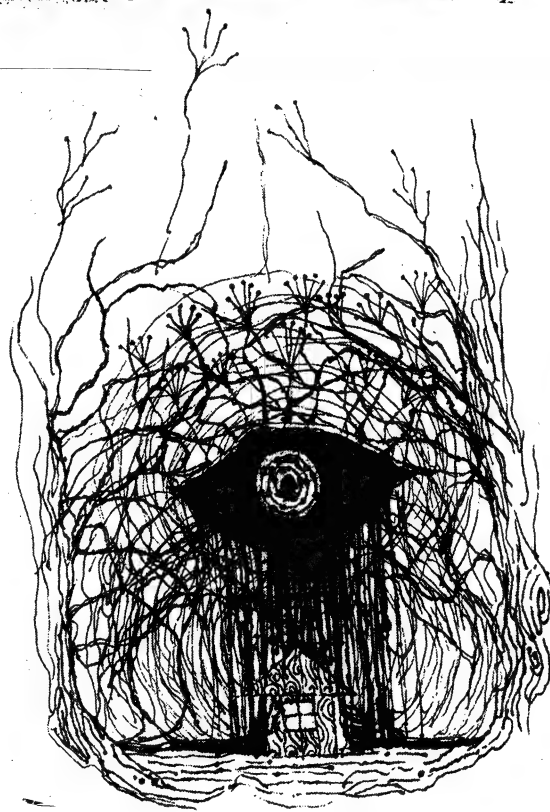
Hexenbezem could appeal as much to a HC/punk audience, as to enthusiasts of primitive black metal à la Ildjarn. Where do you see Hexenbezem standing in today's underground music and what are your main musical influences for the band?

It's not really our aim to appeal to a certain audience. We just write and play the music that we like and it's a plus if people with different musical backgrounds enjoy it. When we recorded the EP, we kind of expected that the hardcore punk scene would pick it up, because we are active in that scene for quite some time and people know us for our work in other (hardcore and punk) bands. We were pleasantly surprised when the underground black metal label Levertraan was interested in releasing it on tape and that our music is enjoyed by the people from that scene.

We always wanted to do a band in this style for quite a while. A combination of 80s American hardcore like Negative Approach, SSD and Siege, weird Japanese punk like Gism and Zouo and the black metal that we were listening to in the 90s (yes, we are that old) like Darkthrone and Mayhem. These influences are quite obvious, but there are some other influences that are more subtle.

For example we are also big fans of pop music with big musical gestures, catchy hooks and choruses. We always try to apply stuff like that to our songs. We believe it's possible to make dark and raw music that is also catchy. And this is nothing new. If you listen to hardcore and punk from the early 80s you can definitely hear the influence of pop music.

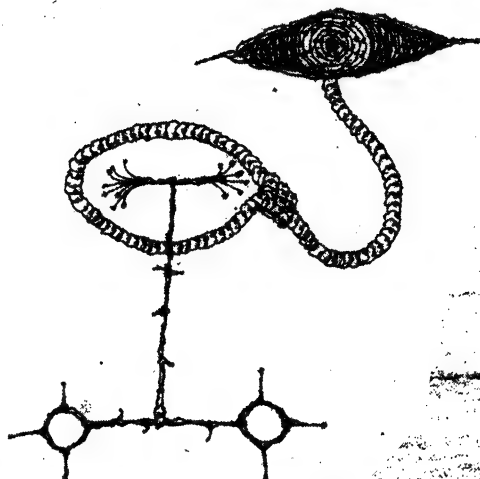
Basically we listen to all kinds of music as long as it's good. We can enjoy hip hop, r&b, classic rock and pop as much as underground hardcore, punk and metal. All that stuff is influencing the music that we make. Some consciously, some unconsciously.



I didn't think of it like that before, but now you mention it, there is indeed a pop quality to at least some of the songs on the EP. When mellowed down a song like 'Without a Thought' could probably capture a bigger audience. The lyrics are pretty bleak though... in fact, a form of nihilism festers

throughout the whole EP... You left the HC optimist that still believed in some sort of a change behind then, or was it never there to begin with?

Optimism and believing in change are things that can come and go in waves. There is also a distinction in believing a change is necessary versus believing that a change is possible through conventional ways. Through everything that has happened over the past few years the one thing we have noticed is that history keeps repeating and humans do not learn enough from the past. All of human knowledge available at the click of a button has not made us smarter, it has made us more stupid. So while we believe there are a lot of things that need to change, we doubt whether this will come through natural growth and evolution. There are a lot of things that need to change through confrontation and disruption - even if it is only to get the fire burning. There is no sense in waiting for people to get comfortable with change, change will only come when those profiting from the status quo are made to feel uncomfortable.



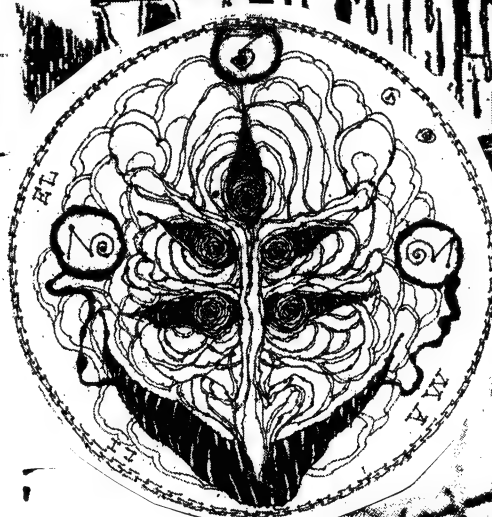
You'll recognize this text fragment of yours from 'Salvation from Anguish': "I can't find any motivation. Nothing fazes me. Nothing Pleases me. It's all the fucking same". It reminded me of something I read in an interview with the ever-interesting Catharsis (Hardware, autumn 1996):

"In a safe comfortable situation, with the same choices offered to you over and over, (...) of course you'll always do the same things and find your life stagnant and boring. There can only be freedom and the possibility of progress when everything is in a mess and brand new choices manifest themselves. (...) With the music we want to make people uncomfortable, maybe encourage people to feel parts of themselves they tried to ignore. That's the purpose of art, I think: to break down conventions and help people to stay in touch with who they really are. In a society which thrives on apathy and tradition, nobody but musicians and artists and renegades will encourage people to admit to their rebellious, violent, lustful, self-righteous impulses. And people must admit to those to be complete."

Does that thought somehow speak to you?

Yes, in a way. I agree that good art should at least try to provoke an emotional response from people, otherwise it is just interchangeable nothingness that adds no value to the world. That is why, for us, music with a political or ideological idea behind it is so much more interesting than music that does not.

That being said, the song we wrote is actually about dealing with depression and acknowledging that depression is not just the sometimes creatively romanticized feelings of doom and gloom but also dealing with a complete lack of emotions. It is a first world problem when you do not have any motivation to get through life because everything feels useless but it is real nonetheless.



I'll use those same lyrics again: "I can't find any motivation. Nothing fazes me. Nothing Pleases me. It's all the fucking same". But now, let's off-topic them: as you mentioned earlier, you're in this thing for a while now. What still motivates you to play this sort of music? What are you looking for these days in the genre, and are there newer bands or releases that caught your attention 'lately'?

The main thing that keeps us motivated is the sense of community in the punk and hardcore scene. The bands and the people in the bands support each other by going to the shows, buy the merch and help out with releasing music and booking shows. As far as I know there is no other music community where this is the case.

And most of all, for me at least, the musicians and bands in the scene really keep me sharp and motivated. They inspire me to push it and not be satisfied with mediocre shit. That brings me to the next thing. The quality of the bands improved immensely the last ten/twelve years. The musical level is crazy high nowadays. They know how to play and write good songs. That was not always the case. When we started playing in hardcore bands in our early twenties the standard then (with a few exceptions) was corny youth crew and/or weak Cro-Mags and Integrity clones. That was it basically. The fact that the bands are so good nowadays makes it actually fun again to go to shows and enjoy the music. A few

examples from the Dutch are Forbidden Wizards, Pressure Pact, GRAF, Azijnpiisser, The Breed, Raylin, Asbest Boys and Floyd Hemorrhoid.

As far as black metal goes. Like I mentioned I listened to black metal in the 90s. I enjoyed the early albums of Immortal, Darkthrone and Mayhem. And I also liked the first two Abigor albums. I still like all those records a lot. That was basically the only black metal I knew and was I not aware of newer black metal bands at all, until a few years ago when I heard the Invunche "II" album for the first time. I was completely blown away by that record and that triggered me to check out other newer stuff. The bands that I really enjoy are bands from Indonesia like Ancient Relic and Nansarunai and from the US like Pan-Amerikan Native Front and Kūka'ilimoku. I am totally into the raw lo-fi sound of these bands and the atmosphere they create. It reminds me a lot of early hardcore.

I must admit that it felt somewhat futile thinking about music and making a zine, while at the same time a war rages in the Eastern part of Europe. Then again, if punk music somehow stimulates critical thinking, then it's probably a good idea to encourage it, since a non-critical mass is the perfect breeding ground for oppressive forces to thrive on. Would you agree?

It sounds cliché but I think especially in times of crisis, music and arts in general are very important. It's an effective way to communicate, exchange ideas and make people aware of certain issues. When I was in my teens the music of Public Enemy and Boogie Down Productions made me more aware of issues like racism and inequality and bands like Youth Of Today and Earth Crisis inspired me to become vegetarian. So if I look at the influence (punk)music had on me and the people around me, I know that it has a lot of potential.

Do you believe that today punk music still has an important subversive role to play, or has this shifted with for example the coming of new forms of media?

I think that it has moved beyond punk as a musical genre for the most part. There are quite a lot of people who come from the punk scene originally or are inspired by punk and spreading their message through other media like movies, documentaries, vlogs, books, music videos, comics, online zines etc.

An important element is the DIY attitude. The fact that you don't need gatekeepers if you want to create something. So, Yes, punk has definitely still a subversive role. It's just way more than just music. It has always been more than music. It's an attitude most of all. The music is just the most well-known element.

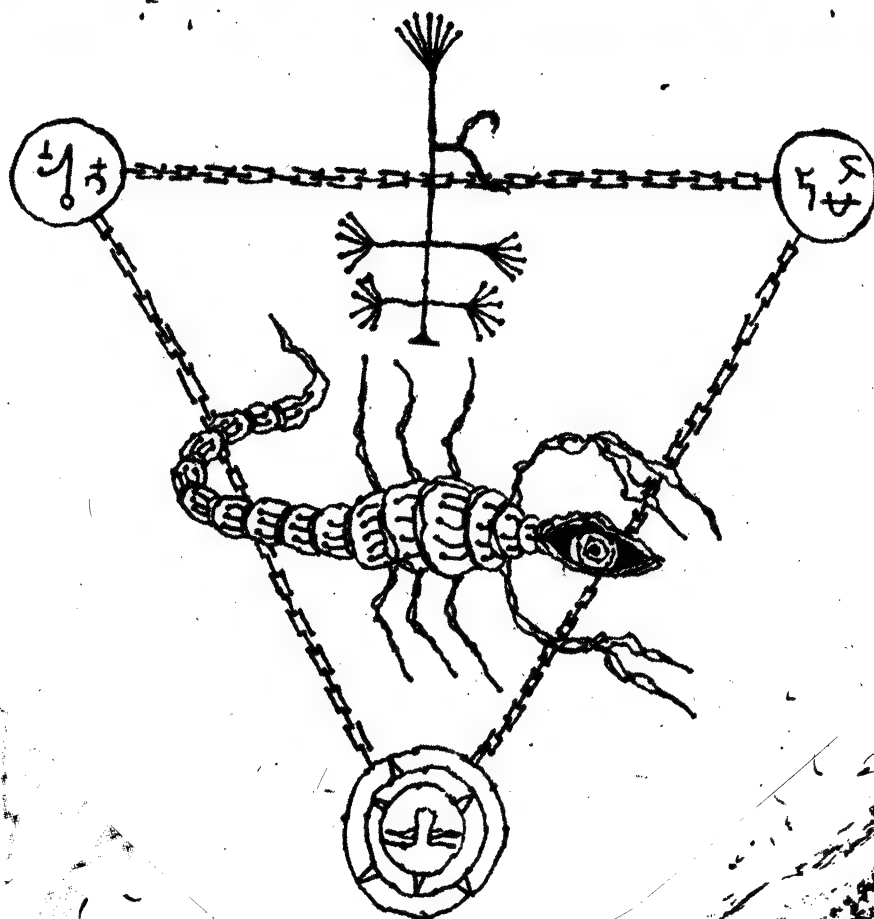
For someone with a background in hardcore/punk the troublesome relation of BM with all things nationalistic is at times nauseating; I'm guessing you must feel the same way about that... One can argue that BM is in se an anti-social genre. And considering the amount of pain and suffering we inflict and tolerate within our society, I can understand the disappointment in mankind as a whole and the misanthropic word view that could come with it (as mentioned: Hexenbezem comes over pretty cynical as well)... but it doesn't justify a racial component. What are your thoughts on this topic?

I would agree that black metal has anti-social roots and much of it serves as a criticism of the way humanity has shaped the world.

However, where some individuals take that as an excuse to glorify nationalism, ethnocentrism and downright racism we firmly oppose those lines of thought. The whole concept of nationalism has always baffled me, what exactly is there to be proud of based on the coincidence of being born in one particular part of the world? Simply being from the same area as another human does not automatically make me feel more connected to that particular human being and it does not place me above another human from another part of the world. We celebrate diversity in

music, art, ideas, and all other areas of life. Hardcore, punk and metal all pride themselves as genres that go against the uniformity of the mainstream but when you look around at a show everyone wears the same clothes and listens to the same bands. We are not better than anyone else.

If anything, with most of the extreme music genres originating in the western world, we should do more to counter the disastrous effect that humanity and predominantly western civilization has had on this planet. Mass consumerism to feed some inner desire to have more shinies than your neighbor so that you can pride yourself on some imaginary status that you have achieved. The celebration of capitalism and near-religious worship of those who have enriched themselves by exploiting others. This is what we should be raging against, not people who do not have the same cultural background as you. People who have been led to believe that marginalized groups or specific religious groups are responsible for whatever the latest fear is, have been duped. They have been brainwashed by individuals who know how to play on the fears of people and how to manipulate those people into acting while in this state of fear. Nationalism, racism, Nazism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, etc. are the enemies of diversity and should have no place anywhere in the world - and certainly not in extreme music. Knowing full well of the paradox of tolerance I will say this - anyone who disagrees can fuck off and go listen to Ace of Base.



Ha, Ace of Base, how time flies... You know they used to be called 'Tech-Noir' instead of 'Ace Of Base'. Apparently people couldn't remember that name, so they had to simplify it (even more). What's the thought behind 'Hexenbezem' as a band name? Not your typical hardcore pick for sure!

I didn't know that. Tech-Noir has a ring to it, but I would associate that name with a dark wave or an industrial act or something. Also the founding member of Ace Of Base has quite of a sketchy past to say the least, but that's another story.

A lot of people think that our name, Hexenbezem, stands for what it literally means: A broom of a witch. But it's actually named after a tree disease called 'heksenbezem'. It's a form of proliferation in trees which is caused by a fungus. It looks a bit like a birds nest actually, but it's definitely not. It sucks the nutrients and energy out of a tree till the point where it eventually dies. To us that is quite intriguing and a cool metaphor as well.

I'd definitely agree with that! What can we expect from Hexenbezem still? Are there plans to release the Depopulate EP as a 7 inch as well by the way?

Right now we are working on material for a new EP. We are busy writing and rehearsing and hopefully it will see the light of day this spring/summer. That is what we are focusing on right now. We don't have plans to release the Depopulate EP on vinyl, but if there is

a label out there that wants to do it, of course we are interested.

Due to the fact that one of us is not living in The Netherlands it's next to impossible to play live. We actually had a couple of live shows planned last January in Amsterdam and Kortrijk with Invunche and The Breed, which we were extremely excited about. Because of another lockdown they both got cancelled. As you can imagine we were very disappointed. Not only the bands and organisers involved. There were quite a lot of people as well who were really looking forward to see these bands live. Fortunately it looks like we're going to do a few shows this September. Hopefully nothing is going to happen in the meantime, like another pandemic or some natural disaster...

I also wanted to mention Tadzio, who did an amazing job on the artwork of Hexenbezem. He is an amazing tattoo artist and musician. People should check out his stuff. That's "tetsubakru" on Instagram.



VAAMATAR

Interview with K and WP.

The Finnish-ish band name, a pseudonym like 'Kathaarian' or an album title like 'Evil Witching Black Metal' all suggest influences from older Greek to Nordic BM. Is it challenging for a modern Californian BM band to transcend these foreign and distant influences into a sound that is both traditional yet relevant?

K: To be honest, we didn't plan it that way. I think we are both just very naturally attracted to the more nasty and dark side of black metal. We are both into the harsher side of it, as well as the melodies that era brought to the table. I don't think it was difficult for us to channel this era really because we simply are just deeply moved by it and listen to it on a regular basis. If you live and breathe a certain type of music, it's just second nature when it comes to the songwriting process. We don't really care what other bands in California are doing. We definitely pay attention to what bands around the US are doing for sure, mostly because we are just fans of heavy music in general, but as far as it being challenging? I don't think so. It's not 100% conscious for us to be doing this music. It's basically us just trying to write music we'd wanna listen to.

Californian BM actually played a huge role somewhere around the beginning of this millennium in directing my personal musical taste towards BM via bands like Weakling, Xasthur and Leviathan (amongst some other more low-profile tUMULT releases). What these bands had in common is that they morphed a familiar BM-sound into something new-ish. Do you look for ways to incorporate new elements in Vaamatar's sound? Were aforementioned projects important for you as well?

WP: I personally have no connection with any of the aforementioned projects. I don't even consider us a 'Californian Black Metal' band. Only I currently live here and I'm not even from here originally. My two rules for songwriting in this project are that it needs to sound like Black Metal and the guitars need to be in D Standard. There

are some very obvious influences and nods to other metal bands on this album but also I'm sure outside influences from other genres crept in even though I wasn't actively thinking about it in the moment. Some of my favorite bands are the ones where you listen and realize "that is 100% X style of music, but I don't know any other band that sounds like them." I hope we've achieved that on the album.

K: Living in San Francisco for most of my adult life, Aquarius Records had a big influence on formative years of getting into underground black metal. No other store has touched the amount of work they would put into doing reviews and making sure people heard stuff they liked. That Weakling LP is a masterpiece. As far as inspiration, I am a big cult horror fan which is probably apparent on EWBM and this new record. I worked at a movie theater as a projectionist and programmer for a while and was able to subject the public to some depraved cinema. I feel like my love for that kind of stuff comes out in our sound. Lyrically, I'm inspired by poetry and philosophy writers. Some that inspired me on this new album are Lyn Lifshin, Leonard Cohen, James Reaney, Margaret Avison to name a few. I'm deeply moved by people who see how beauty, darkness and romance are all intertwined and find inspiration in their immediate environment.

The new album, Medievalgeist, will be released on Iron Bonehead; in terms of underground BM that's a major label. How did this unfold? Can you already tell us something about the album?

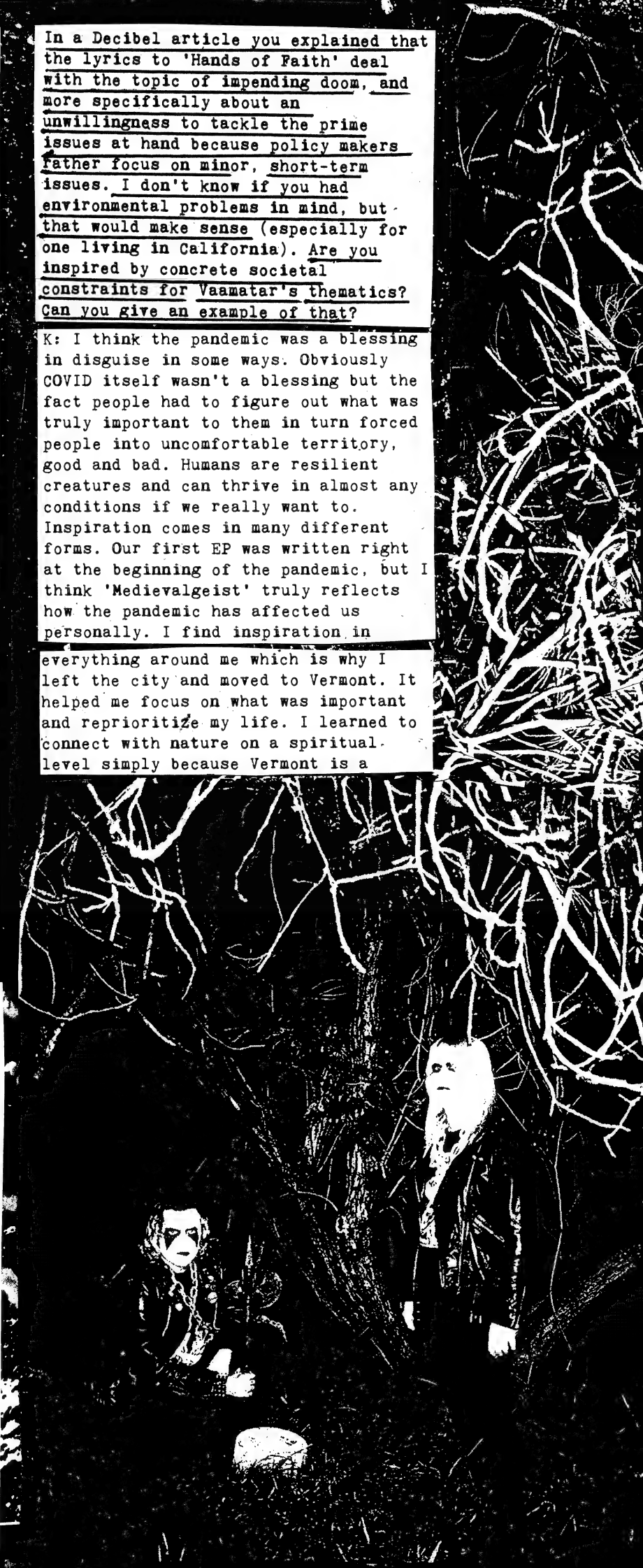
K: It was simple really. We hit up Patrick at IB when we recorded the first EP and asked if he would be interested in helping us release something in the future. He was pretty prompt with his response and said to send the new album when we had it recorded. So we recorded it then sent it. He was very responsive and was eager to help us put it out. It worked out very naturally. We are excited to be working with the label.

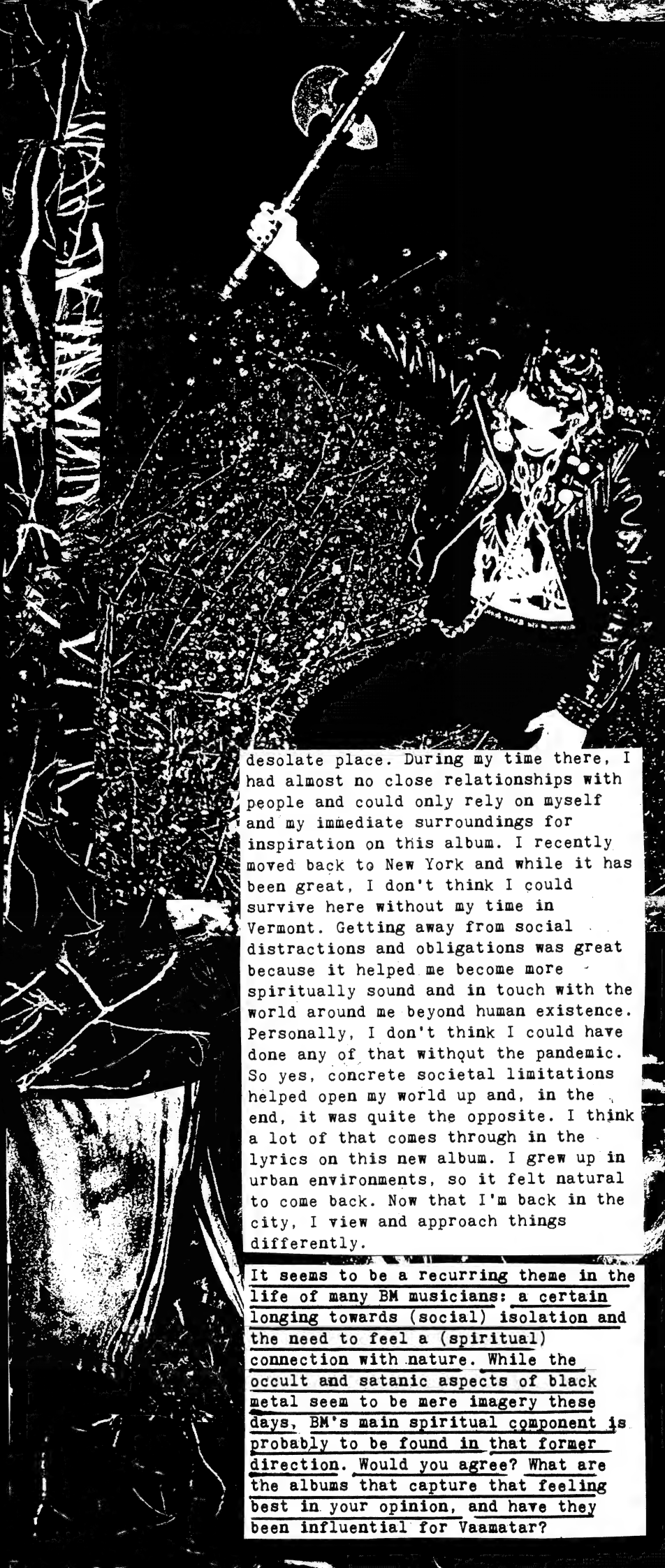
This new album is a lot more focused. We decided to record with Greg Wilkinson at Earhammer studios in Oakland, California. I am originally from the Bay Area and have recorded with him many times in the past and I knew he would do a killer job. Not only that but I'm super comfortable being around him and working with him. I consider him a close friend as well. We decided to go with cleaner production. In my opinion, most of the best black metal albums have a cleaner production and so we were impressed with how the raw tracks sounded so we decided to do little to no tweaks. Musically, it's a lot more organized and forward thinking with stronger melodies and a more aggressive/nasty vocal approach. Rehearsing and being in the studio for multiple days compared to one or two days makes a huge difference. As far as lyrics and themes, the lyrics are darker and more meaningful. Subjects of ancient possession, nocturnal worship, fetish/sex and the philosophy of nature and religion are all discussed.

In a Decibel article you explained that the lyrics to 'Hands of Faith' deal with the topic of impending doom, and more specifically about an unwillingness to tackle the prime issues at hand because policy makers rather focus on minor, short-term issues. I don't know if you had environmental problems in mind, but that would make sense (especially for one living in California). Are you inspired by concrete societal constraints for Vaamatar's thematics? Can you give an example of that?

K: I think the pandemic was a blessing in disguise in some ways. Obviously COVID itself wasn't a blessing but the fact people had to figure out what was truly important to them in turn forced people into uncomfortable territory, good and bad. Humans are resilient creatures and can thrive in almost any conditions if we really want to. Inspiration comes in many different forms. Our first EP was written right at the beginning of the pandemic, but I think 'Medievalgeist' truly reflects how the pandemic has affected us personally. I find inspiration in

everything around me which is why I left the city and moved to Vermont. It helped me focus on what was important and reprioritize my life. I learned to connect with nature on a spiritual level simply because Vermont is a





WP: While I do believe lots of bands have a spiritual connection to nature, I straight up don't. I'm from the city and I need to be surrounded by concrete and electricity in order to stay sane. Most of the Black Metal bands I enjoy tend to be more Satanic than anything else as well. I think Satanism can be easily linked to the social isolation tendencies of this style. Satan is the adversary and I feel like a lot of people who listen and create this music have a misanthropic elitist "us vs them" attitude which results in some form of isolation. We're not an overtly


Satanic band at all but I'd like to think it's influenced us in some way. I don't believe Satan = Black Metal either, but it's more important than just imagery in these current times. I suppose I partially agree with your statement.

K: I agree to some extent. There's just some styles of music that make sense with a certain lifestyle or connect with how you view the world. My roots are the classic badass Satanic bands like Bathory, Slayer, Beherit, Blasphemy, etc., but let's be real, those bands all created their best albums when they were teens and in their early 20s. If I'm speaking from experience, when I was at that stage in my life, I couldn't think of anything more rebellious and evil than Satan. I don't consider myself a Satanist really

desolate place. During my time there, I had almost no close relationships with people and could only rely on myself and my immediate surroundings for inspiration on this album. I recently moved back to New York and while it has been great, I don't think I could survive here without my time in Vermont. Getting away from social distractions and obligations was great because it helped me become more spiritually sound and in touch with the world around me beyond human existence. Personally, I don't think I could have done any of that without the pandemic. So yes, concrete societal limitations helped open my world up and, in the end, it was quite the opposite. I think a lot of that comes through in the lyrics on this new album. I grew up in urban environments, so it felt natural to come back. Now that I'm back in the city, I view and approach things differently.

It seems to be a recurring theme in the life of many BM musicians: a certain longing towards (social) isolation and the need to feel a (spiritual) connection with nature. While the occult and satanic aspects of black metal seem to be mere imagery these days, BM's main spiritual component is probably to be found in that former direction. Would you agree? What are the albums that capture that feeling best in your opinion, and have they been influential for Vaamatar?

but I relate to the spiritual component and have been exploring that more in recent years. True Satanism is spiritual at its core and it's obvious that component is missing from most of the blueprint albums. Don't get me wrong, I love all the classics but I don't find them relatable on a personal level. They are mostly nostalgic and have cool riffs. That being said, I listen to lots of different genres of music and am inspired by it all. As far as creating music, black metal makes the most sense. For me, black metal is an accumulation of all things beautiful, raw, romantic, ugly and dark. I can't think of many other metal subgenres that capture all of that as perfectly as black metal. Some albums that come to mind that capture that feeling for me are Emperor - Anthems to the Welkin at Dusk, Cultes Des Ghoules - Henbane and Ulver - Nattens Madrigal.



ethical veganism

BACK FROM HELL!

Have you considered rave music?

THUNDERDOME II JUDGEMENT DAY



TV-CD
ARCADE

The initial idea for this chapter was to explore a type of music that is as much BM as it is electronic music. Ignoring the fluffy dungeon synths, focusing on the more upbeat satanic riddims.

Since Le White Filth has the air of a man who knows to appreciate an occasional thin line of long expired Thunderdome, he was the obvious pick for this intermezzo. And, en plus, the guy seems to effortlessly unearth all sorts of ridiculously obscure underground tapes from damp *kellers* and grottos where common muggles like myself don't even know the existence of. Here I am feelin' das beat already.

The plan derailed rapidly. More than an elementary load of namedropping our valued guest writer took the opportunity to delve deeper into the issue at hand and tackled topics that are admittedly more significant than a tad of discotheque-black metal.

Obviously, now I too want to give my two cents on the topic, even if worth a penny at best.

White Filth makes a valid point in regard to BM & social media, and I can hardly add anything meaningful to it. Rather I want to single out the "*Not part of your modern BM world!*"-craze he mentioned; compare it to alerting someone for canine fecal matter you spotted on the sidewalk, because that trend right there is some dumb shit.

For starters: what is it exactly that you're not part of? *Our* BM world? Are you suggesting that there are at least two BM worlds, and yours being different from the other(s)? As in: mine is better and yours can suck it. The intellectual level of a toddler, right there on the inner of *your* new record.

Or are you merely opposing the *modern BM world*?

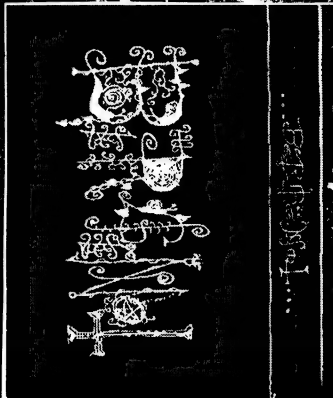
Hinting at the deterioration of BM: it used to be so great and perfect and all that, but nowadays it's crap. Oh, yes, we can hear grandpa metalhead fretting already: "*back in the old days...*". But you probably weren't there at the time, were you?

Werslûüg Methelmezghul self-titled

Vulvus Hexenfotze examines the borders of acceptable taste with an absurd form of raw lo-fi kellersynth. Record opens with an invitation to eat slugs, the logo is snail-like and one of the tunes is named 'Q'Zelleth Xuug Black Snail March'. Yes, we're having a bit of a recurring theme here. To go with it I'll mention that this release might be suitable for that very, very rare occasion that's having you preppin' charred escargots topped with substance. If ever.

Bergenot self-titled

Half-baked, moronic techno mumbo-jumbo from the Saarland scene. Embarrassment guaranteed when someone walks in on you whilst listening to this malarkey. Continue your psychedelic BM gabber rave with *Pilzritual Der Hexen* from Ukrainian, uhm, 'artist' Hexenmeister.





The irony is that the way you pitch your creed of not being part of something, is in itself a form of participation, making you de facto part of the modern BM world. Maybe, rather than pointing out to others that you're not part of something, consider acting like you're genuinely not: don't go full-on for the visual and musical characteristics that are trending, just do it differently then.

Secondly, what exactly is the problem with current BM? Behold, an explanation I stumbled upon in what currently might be the most popular underground BM zine around, namely Arcane Archivist (second issue). The author, Shiiver, who denounces all sorts of BM personality cult, yet graciously poses cloaked, painted and with various weaponry at hand in every zine of his, explains it as such:

"Hordes of weak minded and weak spirited fools are armed and ready to drain you of any true spiritual energy you might have. Any time you succumb to their tactics, you relinquish a part of your spirit into their filthy hands. Within Black Metal today, these false idols reign entirely supreme, so much that many casualties do not realize their mistake until years after they have been fully indoctrinated".

Now I don't think the author grasped the concept of 'indoctrination' entirely. But let's ignore that and summarize his concern: so 'the true' are outnumbered by 'them'. And even though 'these others' are weak minded, they outsmart 'the true' nevertheless, resulting in 'the true' gradually becoming 'them'. Not to offend someone, but doesn't that sound like the script of a B-minus-zombie-movie, or simply a teenage-angst thing?

Never mind, it's OK, it's understandable: you want to secure your precious BM enclave from, uhm, 'them'. So let me comfort you: this heavy music thing has been played on mainstream radio; people didn't care for it. It will always be a niche, and so are you, the listener. Yeah, you're special.

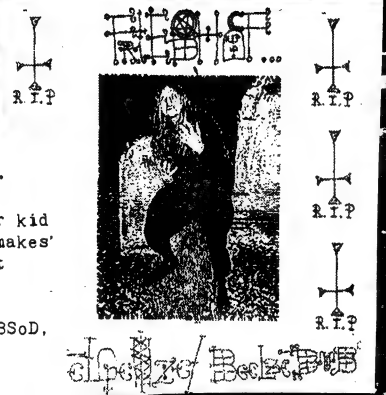
The floor is yours, White Filth.

Sriedhof Beteigeeze / Beelzebub

This is what you get when your kid grows up on 90's rave music, makes a turn towards BM yet does not look up to the Fenriz's or Abbaths, but somehow ends up idolizing Andreas Bettinger (BSoD, or the individual behind questionable projects like Corneus, Heroin Makes Happy, Grausamkeit etc.) before starting his own musical bedroom endeavor. Obscure and weird keller synth that is not only pretty influential these days, but also surprisingly intriguing to listen to. And next thing you know: combining a smear of morbid corpse paint with a gelled-up peroxide dyed haircut becomes a thing.

Rakofonium Krucjata Dzieciecia

There's a narrative to this release (and believe me, it's not a good one). Here goes: an order of Cybertemplars are traversing the nebula in preparation for their Final Crusade. During their voyage they make 'cyberblasts', basically 'songs of hatred' with a BM edge to it. Why BM? Well, these darn Cybertemplars have somehow envisioned all musical genres and concluded that solely black metal music could fully express their anger... and that's that. Maybe these templars lived a long and prosperous life ever after, yet we're stuck with their 'Krucjata Dzieciecia' now.





When Boot's asked me to do another thing for this glorious rag, the idea was to just do another "Five or More" list like the compilation piece I did last time around. So I started assembling a list of Black Metal adjacent releases. Records that started popping up on my radar, for about little over a year now. Music that is being released by labels who mostly deal in Raw BM, but also operate on the fringes of the genre. In other words the legacies of musicians like Mortiis, BSOD, Sort Vokter and their colleagues.

The list of course will be attached to the bottom of this thing, but they brought me back to a line of thinking that was occupying my brain for some time and I just now noticed the overlap.

The whole thing started when Dani Goatwarex shared a video update of mine on Facebook. (remember FB folks?! That's how long this thing has been brewing in my head.) One -possibly the only- comment was: "Keep unboxing out of Black Metal!"

In the back of my mind, my reaction was: "Keep Facebook out of BM!"

So now, here we are... Black Metal vs. social media.

Obviously the guy was right in a way.. I too struggle sometimes with the way I operate as White Filth on the net, talking and showing releases of a genre of music (life choice) that is not meant to see the light of day.. I apologize.

And yet when I open one of my apps; it's all I see everywhere. And that's just the thing, your algorithm is a reflection of yourself and your interests. So in essence a mirror of yourself (to a certain degree). You decide what you want to see and essentially to exist on these platforms.



In my opinion, social media is not the best place to "talk" about and deep dive into the world of BM. Type in #blackmetal and you will see what I mean; an endless stream of shit talking meems, painted up sad girls, guys posting pictures of themselves with their favorite record and the occasional cover of an actual Classic.

That being said, there is a small group of people I talk to on a regular basis that help me dig deeper and connect to releases that I otherwise would not have found, or not as easy. Just like in the Old Days, am I right?! (Don't "at" me) If your platform bothers you so much: tighten up and clear the clutter or better, say goodbye forever. It can be a shitbox of epic proportions..

About two weeks ago I posted a quote from UE (Nächtlich, Black Kruud, Eerified Catacomb, etc.) that was published in the outstanding Kolyama Tales zine. Never was there such an out pouring of "emotions" on a post I did. The quote simply stated: "Should BM be more open to new people?" Answer: "No". What a shitstorm in a glass of water that was. To paraphrase M. from KT: "...people need to be against something, so they are against people who are against something."

BM has always had an (un)healthy amount of gatekeeping within its ranks. From the "No Fun, No Core, No Mosh, No Trends"-slogan/rockers in Norway, to the Fuck Osmose/Drakkar boycotts of the mid 90'ties, the "Not part of your modern BM world!" of today and last but not least, the late 2021 Saarland Synth Wars.. There are more than enough examples throughout its rich and often dark history.

And there lies the key to the connection between all off it. In an underground where the "rules" are so strict, how can there be so much love for the outliers connected to the genre? (See the Playlist)

Take a band like Lugubrum for example? There is so much respect for a band that always goes against the grain, going as far as to defecate on all of it..

All off it except the core meaning of it all.. Pure Freedom.

THUNDERDOME

F*CK MELLOW THIS IS HARDCORE FROM HELL

DJ HOOLIGAN
B.O.T.T.R.O.P.

RAMIREZ
Terapia

HARD ATTACK
Bonehead

REXANTHONY
For You Marlene

INTERACTIVE
Amok

THE SPEED FREAK
Sanic-Miss EP

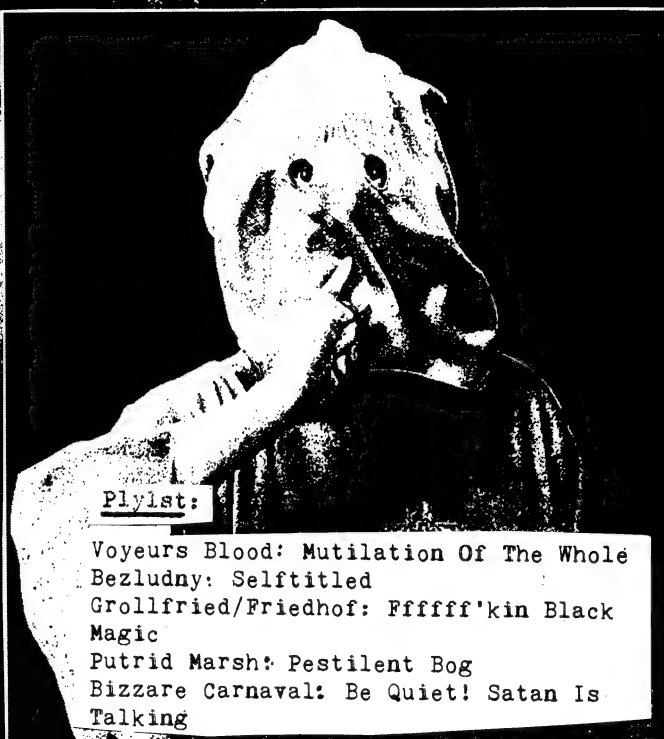
ASYLUM
Mescalum

ARCADE
TV-CD

FROM HELL TO EARTH THUNDERDOME VI



TV-CD
ARCADE



Playlist:

Voyeurs Blood: Mutilation Of The Whole
Bezłudny: Selftitled
Grollfried/Friedhof: Ffffff'kin Black
Magic
Putrid Marsh: Pestilent Bog
Bizzare Carnival: Be Quiet! Satan Is
Talking

Honorable mentions:

Altared Heresy: Discography
Forbidden Temple: Mystery Gates



TENEBROSITAS

Interview with Boris Milakovic

I think it's fair to say that Tenebrositas' sound can be compared to early Gorgoroth, Transilvanian Hunger or Mattens Madrigal. That being said, I noticed you were very active in the underground hardcore/punk/crust scene before: what made you decide to start a full-on black metal project? Why did it take you so long to go for that approach?

True, early Immortal can be added to the list of the Norwegian classics, but influential as well as many other bands around the world who continued to play the second wave style when it was no longer popular in Norway itself. From the usual true / raw / cold and grim suspects to many small bands, projects, albums and demos.

Since my older brother had a big collection of records back then, I started from blues rock, hard rock and punk rock classics. I was quickly drawn to more extreme things, so around that same time I got a dubbed tape with Venom's "Black Metal" and Black Flag's "My War". I discovered the real underground through the "Hardcore Ljubljana" LP compilation and immediately entered the world of fanzines and cassette trading. What particularly captivated me was the early crossover thrash. Again, I was striving for more extreme things, not just hardcore punk, I also listened to industrial, darker post punk and the likes, and through a network of fanzines I of course came in contact with the early extreme metal scene.

At the time the second wave started I was deeply into the grindcore and extreme punk scene, so it can be said that in my case it was partly a Johnny-come-lately scenario. There had been links, but my more pronounced interest in black metal returned when some music trends came to the HC/punk scene that didn't suit me so much anymore. So I turned to that side again looking for a more extreme and uncompromising sound.

After black thrash, black death and black doom, the pure second wave sound

and aesthetics began to creep under my skin more and more; that raw melancholy began to suit me perfectly. Besides crusty hardcore punk, I was active in the experimental / industrial / noise scene as the one man project Gruuthaagy, which after an analog phase entered the electronic phase. From that I learned to do everything myself concerning production: when I learned recording guitar, I was finally able to start my black metal project.

By then, my taste was developed, so I could immediately start with Tenebrositas in a style that is strictly second wave / raw black metal oriented. My previous bands' themes were also getting darker, so Tenebrositas was the culmination of that.

To me Tenebrositas is something like a black mirror, a reflection of reality, but also a portal to a different world where there are no more human illusions. That way Tenebrositas has some of my own approach, but it's also consistent with the true black metal theme. In addition to old Norwegian and underground raw black metal influences, what is now called Finnish black metal suits me too, so there are these influences in my sound as well.

As for my HC/ punk roots they are still present in my GutterSkull project, and my electronic postindustrial/dark ambient work has evolved into my vampyric dungeon synth project Talog.

Is it important for you that your BM stays close to the sound of the originators? There are those who think it's too easy to just replicate that 'traditional sound', whereas others think that that is exactly how BM should sound like. What elements must a valuable black metal record contain (or not contain) today?

Yes, it matters to me because that sound simply works for me. I'm not too burdened with what black metal should be like today, I play whatever I feel like. Black metal reduced to its essence gives me everything I need to express myself through Tenebrositas.

I listen to some other black metal styles, and I don't have a problem with that if the sound suits me, but there are also things I wonder why they're called black metal at all.

I must mention that in fact no one has completely replicated the magic of Pytten's old Grieg Hall studio; the original Norwegian sound was a reflection of that time and space, but the musical direction that was then defined was simply too good to go extinct. Of course, as such, it's not for everyone, but that was not the goal anyway.





When looking at the discography of Tenebrositas, I noticed that you released three albums in 2015 and then it slowed down a bit: the fourth album came out in 2018, and thereafter you only released a few more tracks. Was 2015 a truly exceptional year for you artistic wise, or do you rather work longer on the music before releasing it nowadays?

It's not exactly like that, but chronologically close. It all depended on how much time I had; I'm a hard working working class guy and that means that sometimes there are periods when there is no time for everything, but it generates ideas and inspiration that will manifest itself later.

I haven't recorded a full length for some time indeed, although there are riffs for it, but before that is about to be recorded there will be more demo / EP / single stuff. All material, be it a single or an album, is conceptual, and I attach equal importance to it all, but of course, an album is the most demanding form, so I'm not really in a hurry for it... Let everything go the natural way.

One of your very early punk bands 'Antitude' was a so-called peace punk band. Having in mind that you are from Croatia, one of the nations directly involved in the Yugoslav Wars of the 90's, I can assume that you have a strong opinion about the war in Ukraine as well. What surprises me is that in Croatia's neighboring country Serbia a lot of people seem to agree with Putin's war... Can you understand that?

That was 30 years ago and from then until today my lyrics and attitudes have changed because of real life experiences, now it's just pure disgust for all politics.

For example, our band Nonsense, which was active in the 90s as a grind / noise band, returned in the 2000s as a thrashcore band, and I wrote lyrics in Croatian, full of dark sarcasm and bitterness. We also covered Impaled Nazarene. Nuclear Altar the last band I played in was crust punk with apocalyptic, dark lyrics in English; there was no more moralizing.

So my current position is trust no one when it comes to politics and regarding relations towards people it's respect those who respect you regardless of their background.

None of my current projects reflect any political activism, so the views I will express do not have to be related to them, I have no problem with my projects being appreciated by people with whom I do not share views.



THE FOREBODING FROST COVERED RUINS

All this being said, I have my own view on the war in Ukraine, which is a reflection of my real life experiences.

Essentially, a complete disappointment in ideologies that, from everything I have learned through life, are nothing but hypocrisy and a mask for corruption, nepotism and kleptocracy.

Today's society is polarizing around everything possible: left/right, liberal/conservative, then covid, and now back to the extreme East/West division. But none of that solves the problems I mentioned, so personally I don't see the point of it all.

As a result of the conflict of interests of the great powers, smaller nations and states are constantly sacrificed in these games of power, and since I myself come from such a smaller state, I primarily look at it from that perspective.

The invasion on Ukraine led to an even sharper division of the East versus West line, so even those countries that were relatively neutral found themselves in a situation where they began to choose sides for their own security.

I don't think that this is always good for smaller countries because they come into someone else's sphere of interest.

Although this is completely impossible in today's global economy, they should, if they really want the best for themselves, first of all build an independent economic policy and protect their own interests, and not become vassals of any superpower.

War is a situation where something like this becomes difficult to sustain, because it is a bare struggle for survival. But in the long run, from post-war experiences here, if the problem of corruption isn't faced, a less important country is still doomed to extinction, because a dysfunctional economy eventually leads to emigration.

For example, by joining the EU, Croatia almost completely relies on the import of goods through a bunch of retail chains, which eventually deepened the

collapse of domestic production and people went en masse to the West for economic reasons.

On the other hand, Serbia is historically more oriented towards the East, but economically it's also poor due to corruption and people leave the country for the West too, or to work in Croatian companies since there are labor shortages here.

The same is happening in other countries of the former Yugoslavia.

One of the characteristics of corruption is the enormous power of political parties, which, as in the former socialist system, makes people economically dependent on politics through a network of bargaining through party and family ties to the extent that the eligible displace the capable. In the capitalist system, this has a disastrous effect on the economy.

These are topics that should be addressed by many former socialist countries, including Russia itself. The West is primarily looking for its political and economic interests, but Russia is certainly not a successful alternative.



The region of the former Yugoslavia itself is a territory where East and West, Europe and Asia, Catholic, Orthodox Christianity and Islam meet, and because of all these explosive relations it is also called a barrel of gunpowder.

Some lessons some people here may have learned though, but the old divisions still exist. I do not live in Serbia, so I cannot completely comment on the situation there, and not everyone there thinks the same, but because of historical ties, Serbia gravitates towards Russia politically, while Croatia, where I live, gravitates towards the West. But there are also those in Croatia who have sympathy for Putin, both on the right and on the left, which is the situation elsewhere in the world. Some like his opposition to NATO, and even his authoritarian character. Some are now turning away from it but some still believe in such propaganda, perhaps because of the legacy of the personality cult. There

are connections between some politicians and Russian oligarchs too. On the other hand, it is also a consequence of disappointment towards EU membership, which hasn't changed anything concrete for the better. However, this is not something organized here, Croatia is also very fond of Ukraine, so women and children, war refugees from Ukraine, are here in friendly territory.

I may not have said so much about the war in Ukraine itself, but these are some unresolved issues that I have had contact with that ultimately also shape the world into what it is now.





NOSFERATUOVI
HLADNI
DVORI



In an interview I did with O. from Void Prayer (Boothaeven's Magazine 1, 2017) he referred to the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war as follows: "Growing-up being bombarded every day, having almost nothing to eat and drink, left a huge impact on, not only our music, but everyday life". Perhaps that's why the music from those Black Plague Circle bands is genuinely disturbing... Does that period also seeps through in the music you make with your current bands?

My hometown Požega did not suffer as much in the war as Sarajevo, but some of my friends at the front were killed in the war, and the war must have left its mark on all of us. Here, politicians like to blame the war that has once waged for their own incompetence now, so basically I don't like to be too reminiscent of war. It is the Black Plague Circle with its success, at least within the framework of something as obscure as underground black metal, that is an example that such an attitude can be overcome. Within Tenebrositas, war itself is sometimes represented by medieval warfare aesthetics, while modern war is often the subject of my project GutterSkull.

I must complement you with the artwork for the Tenebrositas releases (as well as for the Gutter Skull and Talog releases). Did you draw these yourself?

What's your biggest inspiration when it comes to visual artwork?

I have been drawing for myself for as long as I can remember and the biggest influence to start with were comic books; I am from the generation that grew up on them. Of course, all the visual aesthetics that go with the music I follow has also hugely impacted me. I did art for various covers, fanzines, t-shirts and the likes from the 80's till now. Lately it has become quite minimalistic, cold and raw, which fits with my music. A visually simple style with which I go for maximum expression, that's how I want to be recognizable. There are also those who find my drawings more interesting than my music, although they are all one, I respect that as well. I don't have enough time to dedicate to art that isn't connected to music, but that visual aspect is very important to me.



I'm definitely not one of the persons who thinks your drawings are more interesting than your music, but I must admit that these drawings made me look into your projects at first. After all, there's so much music coming out these days, and although I'm definitely fan of the typical BM aesthetics, but it's also fairly easy to crank up the contrast scales of a photograph that is having a cloaked guy striking a pose with a bit of corpse paint, a chandelier and a medieval weapon. I think I appreciate your more authentic effort better then. But, hey, from your perspective of an artist: what are the Black metal or hardcore cover artworks you like the best (you know, the ones you stare at just a little bit longer when you grab the record)?

There are a lot of amazing covers and art. The front cover of the Boneless Ones "Skate For The Devil" LP comes to mind now. Visually it's metal punk perfection, I've spent many hours as a teenager looking at it and playing this lesser known crossover masterpiece. Cut and paste black and white aesthetics I have enjoyed first through many DIY hardcore covers, and I am glad that it's still used today in the black metal underground. One of the influences that determined my drawings

would certainly be the primitive and dark minimalism of the UBR "Corpus Delicti" 7 inch EP.

Ex-Yugoslav hardcore was often much darker thematically than elsewhere: disillusioned, apocalyptic and to me often with an atmosphere of existential horrors.

Iconic BM covers like the one for "Transilvanian Hunger" affect me, of course, and since I'm someone who expresses myself through my drawings, I can allow authenticity in that field: the themes are the same, but I can simply draw them in a way that reflects what is in the music itself. Evoking darker archetypes is what primitive art is very good for. To be effective with such minimalist expressive art requires high concentration and ability.

And maybe one last question: do you know 'Jure Grando'? Is that in fact an important figure in Croatia's folklore?

I know about Jure Grando; there are many interesting myths and legends all over the Balkans. In the part of Croatia where Jure Grando comes from, the folk tradition includes *the Strige*: fantastic creatures that are very similar to the Transylvanian vampires *Strigoi*.

My part of Croatia is called Slavonia (not Slovenia, Slovakia, or Slavia, heh), and the album "Ona Kojoj Tama Se Klanja" by my project Talog is about the brutal and gruesome vampire burial of an unknown woman that happened in a village near my town and as such is among the earliest evidences of belief in vampires.

My father used to tell me fairy tales about forest villas that were part of the folklore of the Lika region where he grew up, and the Medvedgrad fortress around the capital Zagreb for example, is associated with the legend of the Black Queen.

But still, such topics are quite taboo here, and although they have commercial potential, there is not much interest in it here. There are also interesting

pagan customs, some of which have survived, often through Christianity, that took them over and adapted them to its own customs.

These, say, the darker tradition of the local people have not completely disappeared, but unfortunately many things from folklore have been forgotten. However, many interesting legends can still be found in this area, and although not directly, they also affect Tenebrositas. These were very turbulent areas in the Middle Ages, but also earlier in history, so the old wars and conquests are always associated with many legends and discoveries: from Illyrian Wars and Queen Teuta to frozen defenders from the siege of Gvozdenovo, etc. etc.





PUTRID MARSH

"Everything is green. Everything is cursed."

Interview with The Reclusive Goblin

By way of an introduction: if one would ask you to name a visual work of art that evokes similar feelings and thoughts as the ones you tend to induce with Putrid Marsh, what work would you select and why?

I don't think I'd choose a specific piece of art- more so a feeling from combining Albrecht Durer, Hieronymus Bosch, and H.R. Giger. Take from that what you will, but that's how I imagine things to be within the universe of Putrid Marsh.

Combining art from the Early Modern Era with the nightmarish industrial world of Giger does make sense for a DS project... So when you compose music for Putrid Marsh is it important for you to get into a specific state of mind that somehow brings you to that universe?

The first demo I created over a few days during an extreme heatwave, immediate and feverish in its completion. Otherwise some songs were written in solitude, others under the influence. However, Putrid Marsh is very much a part of my daily life. I will create when I'm inspired to, whether it's during a snow storm, pure darkness, or rain. I will create when compelled to.

Compared to the older material the *Laughing Shadows* and (especially) *Oozing Tunnel* releases are a lot harsher and darker... What triggered you to explore that more dreadful spectrum? Can you imagine the project further unfolding into the *Oozing Tunnel* direction?

Thank you for noticing the pivot in style- I used the demos both with Putrid Marsh and Warped Skull to allow me to explore different styles, song structures, sounds, whatever I felt needed to be explored on my end. I was able to take what I liked from those and blend it into a more cohesive, fleshed out album for *Laughing Shadows*.

As far as *Oozing Tunnel* goes- I imagine that to be a separate entity entirely, but still existing in the world of the Reclusive Goblin. Those songs were recorded very quickly, with a Casiotone keyboard and an idea to describe the

world within the Marsh with rudimentary lyrics and bizarre imagery filtered through harsh vocals and weird repetitive electronic drums. I might make some more *Oozing Tunnel* music in the future, but it is not at the top of my list right now...

In a way: do you consider *Laughing Shadows* as the first proper and fully elaborated Putrid Marsh album then? What is the conceptual idea behind it?

100%. The demo collection worked out as the two demos shared similar sounds and song structures, but *Laughing Shadows* was something I set out to be a fully realized album from start to finish. The conceptual idea behind it all is really just Putrid Marsh as an actual territory, a home for the Reclusive Goblin, and the sounds within it. Putrid Marsh as a whole is an ever expanding concept and this album hopefully expands on what has already been created.



A while ago you did a collaboration with Maiden Hair Ov England. Your contribution are songs to one chapter in a longer audio story, namely Strands ov Maiden Hair. Quite nostalgic: it reminded me of the time where we had picture books of fairy tales (etc.) with accompanying tapes; do you remember those?

Yes, those tape + book packages were around when I was a kid, I had a few Halloween ones and some fantasy adventure ones as well.

In general I feel like the storytelling aspect is a cornerstone to DS music. How do you picture the Reclusive Goblin from Putrid Marsh and the environment he thrives in?

The Reclusive Goblin is a creature of solitude, inside this world of decay and fog. The Putrid Marsh is vast and unforgiving, filled with flora and fauna both deadly and life giving. The listener can imagine it however they please. Everything is green. Everything is cursed.

I think you can agree that dungeon synth and adjacent styles aren't the most complex sounds to create an sich (which isn't a value judgement per se). Furthermore: Bandcamp provides an accessible platform and even the imagery can easily be emulated. What separates the wheat from the chaff here?

For me personally, it's about imagery and story. I tend to pass over releases with the same medieval art, digital sounding 'perfect' old sounds, and just a Bandcamp without even trying to release a tape by hand or even a burned CD. I generally don't really listen to a lot of newer releases if I can help it- I like to dig deeper into the history of it all. There is a never ending well of old demos to explore. I feel like a lot of the people out there are starting labels, pumping out a release every week and selling out an edition of 10 tapes with 8 minutes of music on it- it is kind of ridiculous. Being prolific does not equate to being good.

You can tell when people really care about what they are making, in all aspects of life.

Can you suggest some lesser known projects that are worth checking out?

Melancholic Orb of Night, Wurdulac, Febris Manea, Glasberg, Green Man's Harvest



"TALE OF THE HELL FROG"



"SICKLY FUNGUS"

You ended the interview in Gloomhammer (issue 3) with these words: 'I would hope that the art that an individual consumes will transport them to another plane of existence, but nothing will ever detract from the overbearing weight of the chaos we live in'.

That is at the same time a pretty sad take on reality, as well as an optimistic belief in the power of art. Does that statement show the importance of music/art in your life?

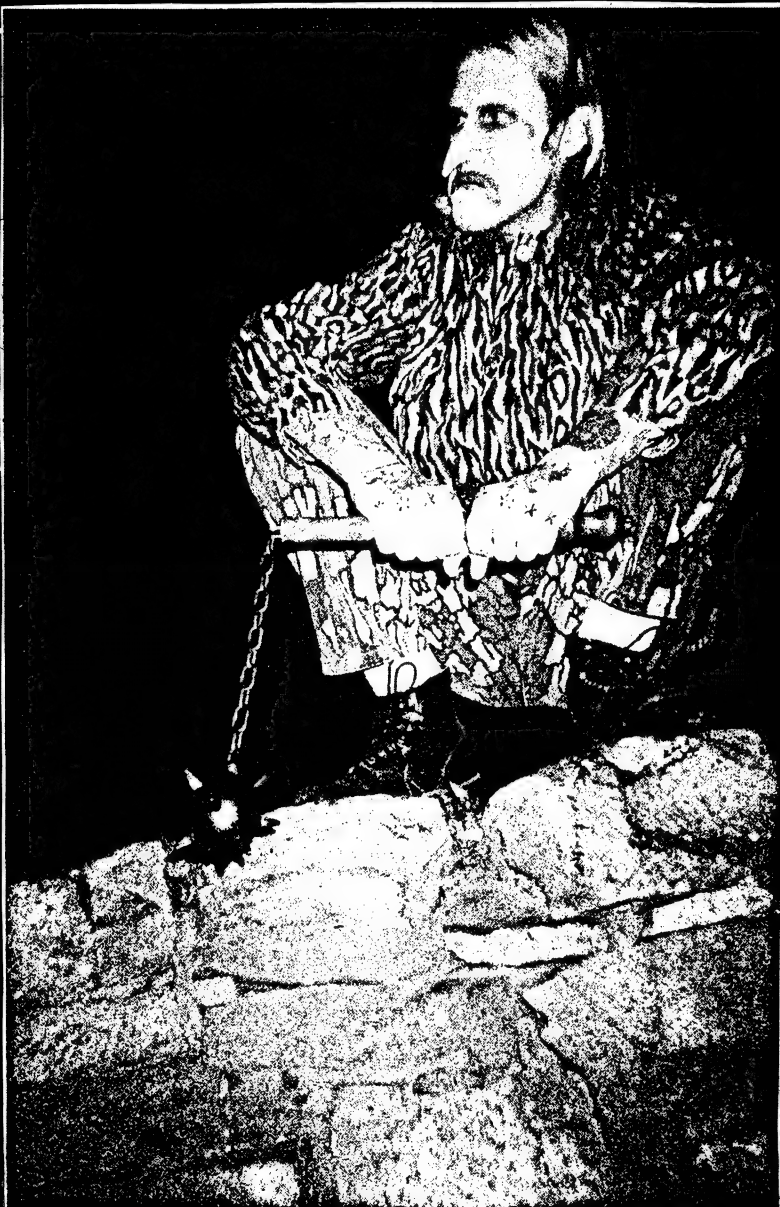
I'd like to think so, yes. Escapism is huge for me, as it doesn't always feel like the human existence is fit to continue on. The ability to create a world and pour into it seems better than dealing with the real world and its immense problems.

Some Putrid Marsh and Warped Skull was released via your own label Maniac Mutant Music. In what way does MMM differ with the labels you mentioned earlier? The aesthetics are really well-done by the way; they remind me a bit of the Total Punk approach.

Maniac Mutant Music started as a necessity to release my own music- I wanted to get it out into the world without having to rely on anyone else. Now it is a vessel to release whatever I please, whether a bootleg soundtrack or reissue of a friends work, or a handmade Putrid Marsh release. MMM is kind of a precursor to other releases, and with proper label releases I can go all out with full color designs and posters or whatever. I also just really enjoy designing releases, stickers; etc. It's just another outlet for creation. I intend to continue releasing things under that banner until it no longer suits me, or becomes a burden.

It seems like you attach a lot of importance to the physical output of the music. It certainly speaks of an artist who's not just making music, but rather creates an overall project. One of the more curious things Putrid Marsh released was a floppy disk... Who's idea was that and what's the thought behind releasing music via that format?

I was really excited to release a floppy disk- I was talking with Narbentage Produktionen, the label out of Germany, considering a release sometime and he came back with an open slot for a floppy disk release. I jumped at the opportunity, because the format is so archaic and unique to an era that it becomes another entity itself. You must have the capability to listen to it, either with an old machine or purchase a floppy disk reader to really get the full grasp. On top of that, the information on the



disk itself is very compressed, adding a sense of ambience on top of the music. It was really fun designing everything as well, as I grew up playing computer games on similar disks. I am very proud of the overall look and sound of that release.

Are there other unconventional ideas you'd like to delve into with the Reclusive Goblin? Or more in general things you wish to accomplish?

Not entirely sure what would even qualify as unconventional these days, but I'd like to do a video sometime, similar to what Mortis or the Shadow Kingdom has been doing. A longform visual story of some sort. I'd also like to perform live possibly, if the proper stars align. I've also got a project in the planning stages with a friend overseas, a collaborative work where we both work on songs and send them back and forth and so on... I've always got my brain working in overdrive, so hopefully the outcome isn't stale or repetitive in nature. I hope that my music allows you to escape the daily dread of existence.

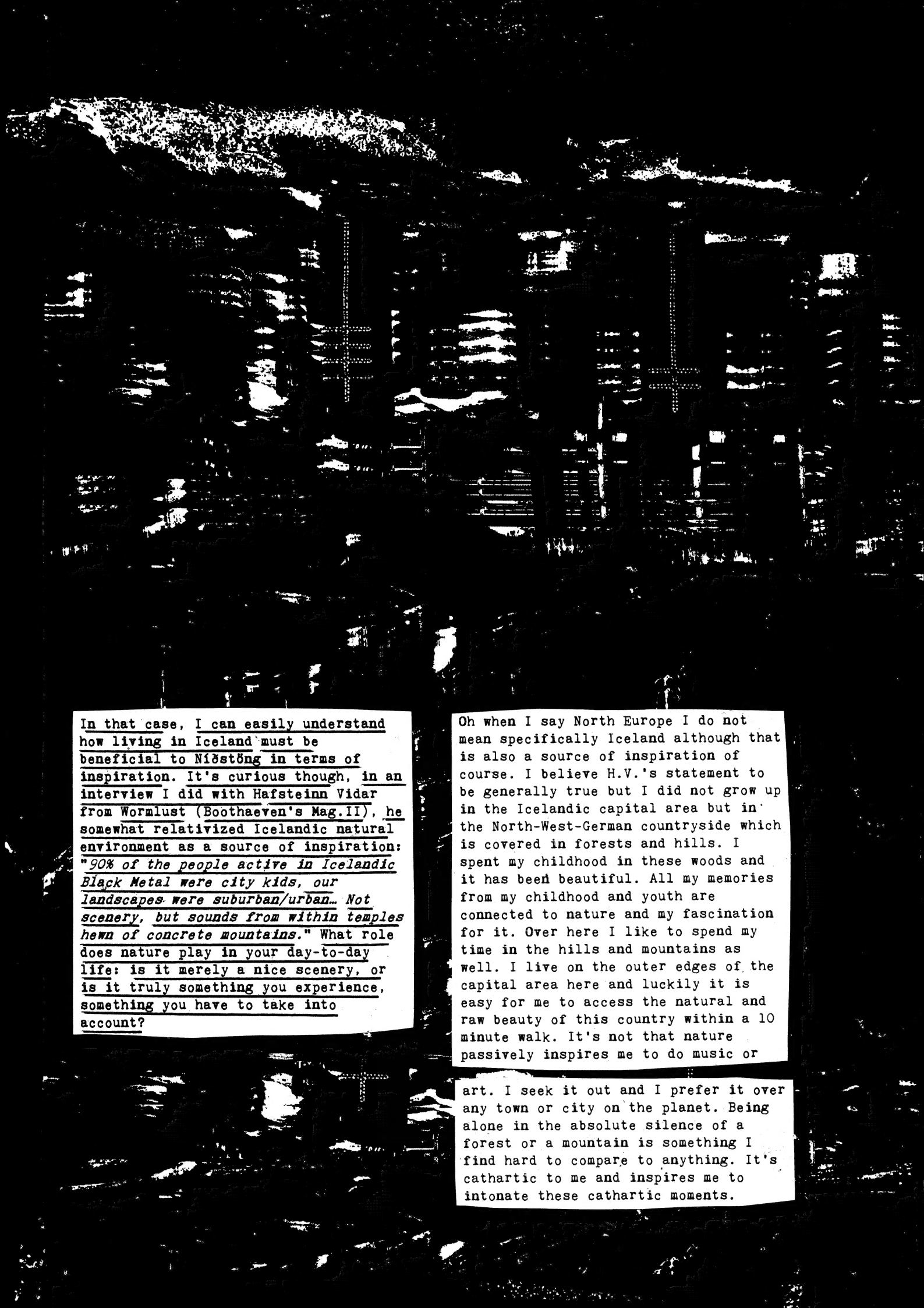


NÍÐSTÖNG

Interview with Adrian Brachmann.

It wouldn't be incorrect to describe Níðstöng's sound as a blend of BM and ambient. Then again: 'a blend' is perhaps not the most adequate description since the songs are either ambient/modern classical or BM. Why is it exactly that you want to explore these two different musical worlds with the Níðstöng project? Would you consider fusing these musical approaches within the same song, or do you rather keep them separated?

I do rather keep them separated. Níðstöng is a project that's influenced entirely by North Europe's nature and I feel that the approach that I am following now mirrors the contrast between the fascinating beauty and the inherent potential of raw destructive force in the best way possible.



In that case, I can easily understand how living in Iceland must be beneficial to Niðstöng in terms of inspiration. It's curious though, in an interview I did with Hafsteinn Vidar from Wormlust (Boothaeven's Mag.II), he somewhat relativized Icelandic natural environment as a source of inspiration: "90% of the people active in Icelandic Black Metal were city kids, our landscapes were suburban/urban... Not scenery, but sounds from within temples hewn of concrete mountains." What role does nature play in your day-to-day life: is it merely a nice scenery, or is it truly something you experience, something you have to take into account?

Oh when I say North Europe I do not mean specifically Iceland although that is also a source of inspiration of course. I believe H.V.'s statement to be generally true but I did not grow up in the Icelandic capital area but in the North-West-German countryside which is covered in forests and hills. I spent my childhood in these woods and it has been beautiful. All my memories from my childhood and youth are connected to nature and my fascination for it. Over here I like to spend my time in the hills and mountains as well. I live on the outer edges of the capital area here and luckily it is easy for me to access the natural and raw beauty of this country within a 10 minute walk. It's not that nature passively inspires me to do music or

art. I seek it out and I prefer it over any town or city on the planet. Being alone in the absolute silence of a forest or a mountain is something I find hard to compare to anything. It's cathartic to me and inspires me to intonate these cathartic moments.

It's obvious that Niðstöng is very much influenced by Nidhogg, Ildjarn and the Nidhogg-Ildjarn collaboration. Should we consider Niðstöng to be an homage band in a way or is more a matter of tapping from the same inspirational vein as those bands?

It's a bit of both really. It's definitely an homage to Ildjarn's and Nidhogg's music but at the same time I believe that the things that influenced their music are pretty much the same which is also why it always fascinated me that much I think.

Bearing in mind how primitive and unapologetic Nidhogg's and Ildjarn's music sounds (and how cluttered their output is), I don't think they ever imagined to grow into the inspirational bands they are today. Wherein lies the strength of that type of music, and what is its relevance for today's black metal?

It's strength lies in its raw display of negative emotion. It's music that does not require classic songwriting processes because it is born from and capturing a moment of negativity, hate or anger through improvisation. It's music that's much more genuine and honest than most of metal music is and that will never cease to fascinate me.

I am not a huge expert when it comes to today's black metal and prefer to stick with older bands but bands like Bone Awl, Slave House and so on would probably never have existed if it wasn't for Ildjarn.



You mentioned the aspect of improvisation. Are the Niðstöng songs improvised? Do you require a certain setting or mindset, and how do you get into that mood?

Instrumentally they are, yeah. I just randomly recorded riffs that I liked over really simple and primitive drum beats and that eventually became an album. There is no real writing process involved like it is for example in my other projects like Akth or Perkwunos. I usually recorded the songs when I was at my worst mentally and I think that is actually the only thing that it required - natural and honest anger. The lyrics however are not improvised and were written after I recorded the songs.

The album Norðurrikið was rerecorded for the physical release; it definitely sounds bleaker, colder and harsher now. Did you have the feeling that the initial take wasn't doing it from the get-go?

That feeling evolved gradually. I wasn't content with how it sounded and wanted to re-record it before it was released on vinyl.

The album is now released via the Belgian label Rabauw; a rather new name. I can imagine more labels showing interest in releasing your music (especially with all these new underground labels surfacing). What made you decide to go for Rabauw? Satisfied with the outcome?

Basically Rabauw just contacted me after being pointed to me by Ian from Witches Moon/Whispers Unhallowed. He seemed dedicated and I liked how it sounded, so I agreed to work with him for that release. The outcome was fantastic and I would definitely encourage other artists to keep an eye out for that label. However, the LP will be handled by my good friend Dani/Goatowarex from Beijing.

Even though you live in Iceland, you're probably a bit of an outsider due to the fact that you're not a native Icelander. Same goes for the music: that typical dark and dissonant style we know from a lot of Icelandic bands, isn't really what we hear from Niðstöng (or even Akth Ganahðth for that matter). Do you consider yourself part of that scene (both socially and music wise)?

I don't necessarily feel like an outsider here in Iceland. I believe that all Germanic cultures have enough in common to switch between any of them without much of a struggle. I just don't really desire to be a part of any scene or subculture in that sense. I know a few guys here that I am on good terms with but I am not that much into socializing within a subculture. Causes more trouble than it does anything good for myself I think. Musically I respect the Icelandic Black Metal scene a lot and admire the talent some of the local bands showcase through their music but my inspirations come from an entirely different type of Black Metal and hence I don't really see myself as a part of the scene musically either.

